



Yours Truly
William G. Shofield

WILLIAM SCHOFIELD :

AN

EARNEST YORKSHIRE METHODIST

HIS LIFE :

HIS CHARACTER :

ITS LESSONS.

WITH GLIMPSES

OF

YORKSHIRE METHODISM

BY

JOHN SYKES

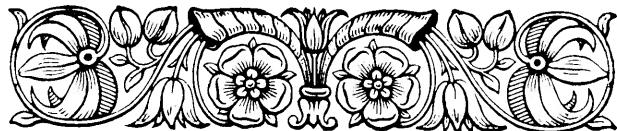
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TO THE
W i d o w
OF THE
LATE WILLIAM SCHOFIELD ;
AND TO ALL CHRISTIAN
Sunday School Teachers
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD
I HUMBLY
D E D I C A T E
THIS LITTLE BOOK.

Huddersfield :
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P R E F A C E

My soul shall make her boast in the Lord, the humble shall hear thereof and be glad.—PSALM XXXIV, ii.

“ We die, my friend, nor we alone ; but that which every man loved and prized in his peculiar nook of earth dies with him, or is changed, and very soon even of the good is no memorial left.”

AT THE Public Meeting of the Christmas Festival in connection with the Marsden Wesleyan Sunday School held December 26th, 1881, some touching references were made to the late lamented president, Mr. William Schofield, which seemed to rouse a slumbering purpose in my mind to write a short memoir of his life.

Having written a paper to be read at the close of his funeral sermon, a few weeks after his death, many of the deceased's most intimate friends requested that the substance of that paper should be enlarged for a small publication. And this request was entitled to respect, because it was made under the conviction that the memory of any man deserves to be cherished when the grass is growing over his grave—who can be remembered as one who loved his fellow-man, and whom his fellow man loved ; and none the less so

when the principle which produces the mutual good will is the love of God in the heart.

The desire to bring unobtrusive worth into open view has some merit in these days of scepticism and formal religion.

To the question, “why was not this work attempted at once?” I reply—that when the heart is sore with recent sorrow for the loss of friends, we are apt unduly to extol their virtues and overlook their failings, or lavish our praises unsparingly on ordinary events of life ; and I have purposely waited the lapse of the four seasons to test the sincerity of the conviction that a brief record of his life may be of some use to those who are living still.

Towards the close of his life William Schofield often said “I should like to think I have been of some little use in the world.” But he never thought or wished that his name should be preserved in books. If this mode of emalming his memory had been suggested to him, such was is self-depreciation and personal indifference to human applause that his protestations would have been sincere and severe. But his friends think that his life, though of lowly origin and local influence, was not unimportant in helping to keep alive the ideas of faith and self-sacrifice in the world ; and if a slight reminder of his virtues through these pages will afford any help to strengthen similar virtues in others, the humble and unpretending effort will be abundantly recompensed.

As a literary work it is useless, and may not survive the forgetfulness of a few short weeks ; but if it contain a single seed of truth, that truth will live ; and if there be anything contagious for good in the rudest record of a life “hid with

Christ in God," then to some it may be a blessing. What William Schofield's life lacked in incident was made up in quiet force of character, of which we have taken due advantage ; and we garland not the tombstone, having refused to crown the brow—we pay no honour to the ashes which we denied to the life.

We never know how well we love our friends until death takes them from us. There were many who felt this when it was said "William Schofield is dead." And after twenty years of intimate and loving acquaintance with him, during which time I silently observed and sincerely admired his private character, one could not help realising this truth supremely. For many men have lived whose sayings and doings following generations have applauded and honoured who have not exhibited qualities of soul more worthy of emulation than the man whom this memoir is meant to honour. Who has not noticed that the successful leadership of a heroic general is commonly recorded in unqualified terms of commendation, while the subordinate officers who may have contributed much to the victory, are overlooked in the narrative of the engagement ?

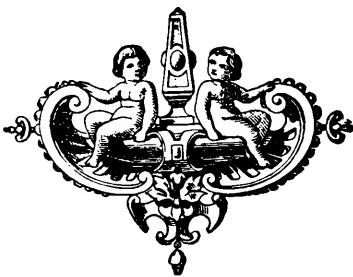
In the year 1881 Wesleyan Methodism lost by death some of its brightest ornaments. Their lives will be deservedly memorialised. But not one of them was more devotedly attached to his denomination, or more willing to promote its prosperity, than the subject of this sketch. Whether he was right or wrong—whether we agree with him or not—he loved his religious sect intensely ; and our observations of these features of his character are not meant to exalt the ism but to portray the man.

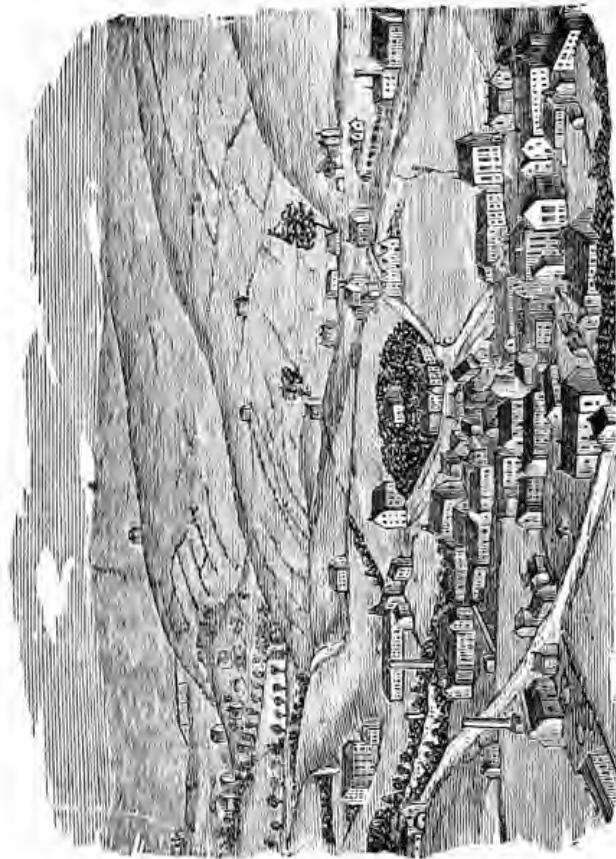
But he rose above his creed. We would there were

more men of like stamp. Stronger than his love of creed was his love of Christ ; greater than his faith in the best of men was his faith in God and His word. His living faith and active love in religious matters made him a good example of a “ man in earnest.” His earnestness was only equalled by his steadfastness ; this was the secret of his usefulness, and his useful life is the only apology for its reproduction.

J. SYKES.

BINN VILLA, MARSDEN,
APRIL 6, 1882.





“HIS NATIVE PLACE.”—*From a Sketch by A. Knader, Marsden.*
“MARSDEN IS A SMALL MANUFACTURING VILLAGE IN THE WEST RIDING
OF YORKSHIRE.”

HIS NATIVE PLACE.

The Earth is the Lord's.—PSALM XXIV, 1.

“ ‘Tis better to be lowly born,
And range with humble livers in content,
Than to be perk'd up in a glistening grief
And wear a golden sorrow.”



M ARSDEN is a small manufacturing village in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and as seen from the tops of some of the hills which are near it, you might imagine that nature had designed it for some inland watering place, where coziness and beauty might strive in friendly rivalry. The scenery of the immediate vicinity is chiefly romantic, interspersed with portions of the picturesque, and its general hilly aspect calls to mind the Scotchman's humorous remark that “in his country they had so much land, it was necessary to make a number of mountains to make it fit.”

The hills, on whose sides are scattered farmsteads and irregular rows of houses, form both the natural and artificial boundaries of the village, and slope gently down upon it, north, west, and south. It was on the summit of one of the southern group, called the "Scout" from which our artist furnished a sketch.

Judging from this bird's eye view, neither the secular, political, nor religious education of the inhabitants seems to be neglected. Conspicuous among the buildings stand the quaint old church and national schools, two handsome and commodious dissenting chapels, Congregational and Wesleyan, two political club rooms of opposite political shade, a Mechanics' Institution, and a town school, with here and there a more pretentious building, and several large mills of modern structure, in which the inhabitants, numbering nearly four thousand, are chiefly employed.

He whose life we record would refer sometimes to these arks of progress, and contrast them with the days of his youth, saying : " Ah, dear ! you young folks ought to be thankful ; there were none such privileges when I was a lad ; things were very different fifty years ago."

The western boundary of the village is the far famed Standedge range of hills, with their wild and wide expanse of moorland ; the first aspect of which is dreary and monotonous, but to those who can appreciate the grace and beauty of naked nature it has some powerful fascinations. During the winter months these hills and moors are wofully bleak, but in summer, when clothed with purple heath or golden gorse, they become sweetly in tune to nature, and agreeable even to a fastidious taste. Here and there a number of sheep or a solitary cow may be seen cropping the scantier herbage, for the

neighbouring farmers have a certain privilege of some limit, known under the provincial term of “sheep-gates” and “cow-gates” on the moors. Beyond this, however, the uncultivated tracts of land are as yet, only the home of game and shooting ground for sportsmen.

They are a continuation of the Northumbrian range of mountains, and constitute a geographical ridge, giving opposite directions to the rivers on each side of them in their onward course to the seas. These hills are now pierced by one canal and two railway tunnels, each above three miles in length, which, combined with the turnpike roads over the hill top, make a triple thoroughfare for trade and commerce between the celebrated seaports of Liverpool and Hull.

The hill called “Pule” stands most prominent in the assemblage. Its highest point seems to mingle with the skies, looking down upon both Saddleworth and Marsden, but situated nearer to the latter place. Its local and detached position reminds us of the schoolmaster in the centre of his class. The summit of this hill is one thousand four hundred feet above the level of the sea, and on a clear day affords not only extensive views in Yorkshire, but portions of the adjoining county of Lancashire. The first main road which skirted this hill on the left was made about sixty years ago, under the superintendence of “blind Jack of Knaresborough.” That road was superseded by one of more commodious dimensions in a few years afterwards, on the same side of the hill, and which is now named the “Old Road,” because since its construction a “new road,” more easy to travel and of modern arrangement, has been made on the right side of the hill; the two different routes encircle the hill, and constitute a pleasant drive for excursionists.

In the ancient days, and while yet devoid of modern

improvements, the journeys with merchandise, &c., over the Standedge hills were quite adventures, and associated with ghost stories and weird legends, the recital of which proverbially speaking "made the hair stand on end."

The nearest town to Marsden is Huddersfield, which is seven miles to the east. Between the two places a beautiful valley intervenes, which is watered by the river Colne. Thrifty and populous villages are built on the river's banks, and in the "good old times," when the population was less, and mainly composed of handloom weavers, the river quietly followed its peaceful way along the vale, and could boast of its crystal waters alive with trout and a great variety of fresh-water fishes. But in these busy, recent days, it has something else to do. Now in its course it sets in motion innumerable mills for the manufacture of cloth, and bears on its current unmistakeable signs of invaluable service rendered to the sons of toil. To trace this important stream to its rise among the Marsden hills is an interesting illustration of the "nes—

" The mill streams
Which turn the clappers of the world,
Arise in solitary places."

Old "Pule" does not effectually check the advance of the Colne Valley to the moors. It seems sturdily to erect itself against the encroach, as if saying, "thus far shalt thou go, and no further," but is too narrow to bar the way; and the valley extends with two long arms, one to the right and the other to the left of Pule, forming two branch valleys of glenlike formation among the other impending hills which enclose them. Here local tourists delight to ramble in the the sunny season. The one to the right is known as "Blake Lee." It possesses many rare and quiet charms, and offers a favourite retreat for jaded men of business, or brain-worn

students, who might find real rest and health among its rough and varied attractions. The one to the left is named the “Wessenden” valley, at the head of which is a large reservoir bearing the same name. Here also nature has bestowed its ornaments. But they are presented to the eye in separate portions on account of so many sharp curves, just enough to prevent a full-length view.

There is something in the alternately peaky, hollow, barren, or fruitful aspect of these vales which is highly agreeable; and out of the mountain rifts, nooks, and corners—discoursing nature’s music—flow many little rills, blending their waters in two babbling brooks, one in each vale, out of which they issue with a twisting course, rippling and gurgling along—as unconscious of significance as innocent youth—only assuming some proportion as they approach the centre of the village, where they unite their waters and form the river Colne. This occurs soon after they have passed the bottom of “Pule,” at the foot of which, on a narrow strip of land, gradually inclining to a plain, stands the village proper, designated the Town Gate, and just before the two streams meet there is an exceedingly narrow and old fashioned street called the “Planks.” In this street, William, the son of Henry and Mary Schofield, was born on the 5th day of April, 1820.

CHAPTER II

PARENTAGE AND BOYHOOD.

God is no respecter of persons.—ACTS x, 34.

“ Shortly his fortune shall be lifted higher,
True industry doth kindle honour’s fire.”

HE was the youngest of five brothers and the second William in the list, the elder one of that name having died at an early age. He was a Marsdenite by double right, and never resided more than a stone’s throw from the place of his birth. His father was a quiet, hard working, moral-living, and well-disposed man, whose chief interest was in his own household ; his leading virtue being to “provide things honest in the sight of all men.” This is not the lowest standard of goodness, and as William Schofield was wont to say “a little religion is better than none at all.” His mother, of whom he always spoke with tenderness, was a woman of strong will, and a good manager in the domestic and practical affairs of life. She possessed a good constitution, and kept a fast hold on life to an advanced age, and much of her physical vigour and firmness of purpose were visibly reflected in her childern, and there

were many points of resemblance to her in the person and temperament of William. What moral teaching she did impart must have been based on the Bible and common sense. Her son never forgot his mother's version of the doctrine : "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," for, when he became a man, and gave similar advice to others, he would give her words verbatim, remarking with feeling : "It is as my good old mother used to say, dead and gone she is—such as ye do, such will hang on ye." She was not that type of woman to whom one would think of applying the proverb that she was "so good as to be good for nothing." There was much stern reality in her nature, which was evinced in securing health, economy, and comfort to her home, and it would be unjust to the mother's influence to overlook her contribution to the simplicity of habit and sincerity of spirit which eventually became attractive traits in the character of her son.

His early training for the most part seems to have been marked by strict coercive discipline which gave a lasting bias to his ideas of obedience to the powers that be. In support of this statement we must look away for a moment from the boy to the man. As a disciplinarian some people thought him at times just a little too rigid. He believed that a child's first lesson is obedience, after that you may teach it what you please. Personally, by precept and example, he endorsed the direction.

" And never take the harsher way
When love will do the deed."

When his forbearance was outmeasured by some act of rebellion, especially in children, he would generally lay the blame at the door of home or nursery,—petting and

pouting—and not unusually bring his own experience for testimony to the power of parents to cure the wayward will, augmenting his argument by the remark,—“If they had had my mother to deal with they would have found it out.”

And if in this he erred, it was on the side of right according to John Wesley’s notion, in whose sermon, Vol. II, No. 101., we find the following advice to parents respecting children : “ Break their wills that you may save their souls. “ To inform their understanding is a work of time, but “ subjecting the will must be done at once—the sooner the better. This is the only foundation for a religious education. “ Carry your point, whatever it costs. Be not mealy mouthed “ like foolish Eli, but speak—calmly as possible—yet firmly. “ I will have it so, and do as you say.”

We give this quotation in full, because the drift of it is identical with the earliest impressions we received of William Schofield. It was in the prime of his life, when he w ~~as~~ superintendent of the Marsden Sunday school. While a~~ss~~essing the scholars from the desk he struck us at once as a man who believed that children must be controlled, that they may learn to control themselves ; for an ungoverned child never learns self-government, which is the basis of true happiness and real religion.

But as we came to know him better it was refreshing to find the depth of forbearance and love which were hid in his heart. The form and voice to his inner feelings were : “ Child’r are but child’r after all—we cannot expect them to have old heads on—an’ they’d “ nobbut ”* look queer if they had.” He meant that there is a happy medium in all things, and that a child’s back must bend but not break ; its spirit must be conquered but not crushed ; it must be ruled

* A dialectical expression. meaning “ only.”

but not with a rod of iron. He also maintained that the first and most important place to do it, is—home.

The burden of this superintendent's complaint was what every Sunday School teacher knows from experience—that the ground on which he tries to sow good seed is made stony in many cases by the training received at home. Hence William always stoutly insisted that it was there where children were made or marred for life.

But his ideas had no connection with cruelty. Goodness that is only founded on the influence of despotism is apt to be short lived. God does not drag or drive us up the divine way. From our subsequent knowledge of this superintendent it transpired that his convictions of a child's loyalty to proper authority which were so firmly rooted in his mind in manhood, were planted there by a mother's hand in his boyhood.

About his child life we have gleaned little more than we have already intimated, that his lively disposition and spirited temperament were kept well in hand, which may account in some measure for the lack of startling incident in connection with his youth. We hear of no tumbling into the canal, or getting lost on the moors, hairbreadth escapes, or enlisting for a soldier. His extravagance partook more of the playful and mischievous turn than the vicious. It was like him to enter the deserted house while the good dame was gossiping, and after placing her articles of furniture topsy-turvy, conceal himself in a corner of the room to enjoy the woman's wonder and dismay, taking due advantage of his opportunity to escape, while some missile was sent flying at his head, which only heightened his fun and completed the picture of his frolic.

At the formal age for apprenticing youths he was bound

to the trade of shoe-making with a man named Sharp, a diminutive individual, who along with his two brothers occupied an old house near Marsden Church steps, where he carried on his business. When the neighbours first learnt that William had become 'prentice to this man it became the village gossip. Such a big lad working for such a little man was such a curious thing; and many ventured an opinion that if ever they quarrelled it would "be bad for little Sharp." The lot of the apprentice in those days was usually a hard one. It meant hard work, long hours, and poor fare, with plenty of cuffs between meals, the only rest and relief from the hard treatment being in the appointed hours for sleep which the "prentice" generally enjoyed on a hard bed, without the burden of much covering. The lot of this youth as an apprentice, was rightly expressed in a remark of his own, "middling considering!" But it is more than probable that it was far from being a "silver slipper period."

We have often heard him refer to that part of his life saying, "I was taught in good time to rough it." But this "roughing it" period developed a vigorous constitution, as it often does. He grew up strong in body, and showed signs of strength of character, but in the wrong direction.

It was when thoughtful persons had begun to speak of him in the moral sense as "getting into a rough lad" that there occurred that event which he himself afterwards regarded as the most important event in his life,—his conversion to God.

CHAPTER III

HIS CONVERSION.

E thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.—PSALM cxix. 59.

“ What is man,
If his chief good, and market of his time
Be but to sleep, and feed ? A beast, no more !
Sure, He that made us gave us not
Our God-like reason,
To mould in us unused.”

WHEN men have lived from youth to mature age, and have become enshrined in the hearts and memories of their fellows, they are not unfrequently spoken of as being ever present long after they have quitted the scene of their labours. As a watch continues its ticking though put away in the pocket or case, so, though the bodies of good men be laid in the grave, their sentiments pass onward unceasingly and others become actuated by similar motives in the spirit of emulation to serve their generation. And not unfrequently the question arises—When, or how, was their usefulness born? And in numberless instances the answer is found in their conversion to God. Thousands of persons who had been useless in the world, after that event have become valuable

members of society; and this was notably true in the case of William Schofield.

In no sense of the term was he ever a student, or what we understand as a brilliant man ; and though he lived to be respected for his practical wisdom and sound sense, the power be wielded over others was not brain-power but heart-power.

“ His armour was his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill.”

He had his own good reasons for being most eloquent when, in declining years, he was urging on young men the fact that early conversion is a step of primary importance, and that no man acts more the part of a man—a true man—a wise and courageous man—than he who renounces his bad habits and declares for Christ. In driving this truth home, his rejoinder was : “ Men may say that so-and-so has gone wrong in his head, but let me tell you when a man turns sincerely to God he has gone right ! not in the head merely, but in the heart ; and if a man gets his heart right—he’ll do ! ”

His own conversion was no pretence. He had no affectation. He hated pretentiousness, and could never play a part. There was no feature of Bunyan’s Facing-Both-Ways about him. Transparent in motive and pure in feeling he “ received the kingdom of God as a little child.” To use an old Methodistic phrase, he was “ soundly converted to God ” in the nineteenth year of his age.

By this time he had often proved that “ the way of transgressors is hard.” In spite of restraint he had become a wild youth, and was pushing madly on in search of pleasure, and as its cup was presented again and again to his lips he drank, and every warning he thrust rudely aside as an un-

welcome guest. But under his leather apron he often carried a troubled conscience, and secretly battled with many a strong desire after a purer life. His own words in reference to those days were : “ I went with the giddy multitude to do evil. I was led captive by the devil at his will, and I always found him a hard master.”

To many, these phrases have no meaning ; but to William, they meant that his passions were swayed by him who is emphatically styled the “ Prince and power of the air,”—the power that whispers to debased appetites “ walk in this way and the delights of life are yours—follow every impulse, and the end thereof shall not be death ;” and for a time this young man believed the *lie*, but eventually saw that in sinful pleasure he was following an alluring and dangerous phantom.

For many years he had cultivated an acquaintance with a William Alderson, who, from a neighbouring county, came yearly into the Marsden district as mole-catcher for the farmers. This young man was a notorious ringleader in street fights and pothouse brawls ; but in justice to his reputation we should say that he subsequently became a reformed character and a highly respected and useful Wesleyan local preacher. But at the time of which we write he was a champion fighter, and the two Williams were fast companions. Alderson was tall, powerful, and physically well built, with a desperate spirit to match, and was the hero of his clique. He was very popular at feasts and fairs, which at that time were attended with scenes of disgraceful and lawless uproar.

From the ruffian’s view these “ were the brave days of old.”

On one of these occasions the two “ chums ” were in

a certain public house, joining in the general wrangle of jollity, when Alderson began to indulge in a little muscular braggadocio, which culminated in a threat to "shoulder" his friend Schofield, and "hug" him round the room. The latter was neither a dwarf in stature nor a coward in spirit, and instantly with a responding bravado defied him "to do it." Alderson then stood upon his honour, such as it was, whereupon, more in jest than earnest, he seized Schofield by the jacket collar, unintentionally and unwittingly embracing the neckerchief in his grasp. There was a short and sharp struggle, in which Schofield had the worst, and the threat was carried out with variations to the amusement of the whole company.

But after "madness came sadness," (an aphorism frequently uttered by William Schofield). The act was only of short duration, but it well-nigh terminated fatally.

It was soon discovered from the way in which Schofield had been held across the shoulders of his friend, that while the spectators had been enjoying the so-called "lark," he himself had been nearly strangled. When Alderson relaxed his iron grip, his companion fell like a log of wood upon the floor, apparently lifeless. Everyone was terrified. Some ran in haste for the doctor—they all thought for several minutes he was dead, and a report to this effect was quickly spread through the village. He was conveyed home after the suspense had been somewhat relieved by signs of returning life; and after proper attention and care, he revived, to the joy of all concerned; and the temporary consternation was laughed away.

But the circumstance made a lasting impression on Schofield's mind; it was a crisis in his history, and greatly deepened his conviction of sin. He felt and admitted that he was altogether wrong—wrong in his thoughts, wrong in

his words, and wrong in his whole life—and his conscience, reason, and judgment agreed that his course was one of unhappiness. He realised an inseparable connection between the two “S’s,”—sin and suffering—and anticipated in a measure a relationship of better omen in the two “P’s”—purity and peace—and he inwardly mourned and sighed—“What must I do to be saved?”

He might have done as thousands do—turn his back on the path of light and life, and quench the spirit of God. But he did not. He was “sick of sin.” His desire to leave it off, and step heavenward was strong, and his attempt was prompt. As the despised tax-gatherer in olden time sat collecting tolls as Jesus passed by and said “follow me,” and the publican asked no questions but arose and followed him, so this young man, through a different medium, heard the same voice, and gave a similar response, but it cost him an effort.

“He that will be my disciple must take up his cross and follow me.”

It was a keen, mental struggle to break away from old companions and bad habits; but he won the victory, and began at once to transfer his energies to a better cause, and his service to a better master.

For him to resolve was to do, and he resolved by God’s help to lead a new life. He had a true conception of the “strait gate” and the “narrow way.” He believed they led right on to the celestial city, and if it were a happy path, or if it were not, he was determined to try it. His experience under these circumstances is beautifully mirrored in the “Pilgrim’s Progress,” when the dreamer saw in his dream “that the highway up which Christian was to go was “fenced on either side with a wall, and that wall was called

“Salvation. Up this way, therefore, did burdened Christian “run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on “his back. He ran thus until he came to a place some- “what ascending, and upon that place stood a cross, and as “Christian approached the cross, his burden loosed from “off his shoulder and fell from off his back.”

It was “somewhat ascending” in the moral scale to William Schofield when he attended a Methodist prayer meeting held one Sunday evening in the Planks, in a cottage then occupied by Mr. Luke Shaw. It was truly said of him that night “behold he prayeth.” His prayer was that of a burdened sinner, and was accompanied with the faith which trusted in Christ as his Saviour, when :

“ Fear gave place to filial love,
And peace o'erflowed his heart.”

With him the simple gospel plan was neither a stumbling-block nor foolishness. He saw that his duty was to look away from himself, and at once and implicitly to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. And he never forgot the time and place—when and where, he first *rested* on God’s promise and the light of saving truth dawned on his soul. In after life he frequently spoke of his conversion as an important and blissful change, and said he had “been born twice in the same street,—once of the flesh and again of the spirit.” And he has often said, “I could go and stand on the very spot where God for Christ’s sake spoke peace to my soul.”

In course of time he became the owner of the cottage in which that meeting was held, and confessed how he prized it for its pleasant memories; like Robert Raikes who never afterwards passed that spot in Gloucester where he first conceived the idea of Sabbath Schools without uncover-

ing his head and thanking God for the heaven-sent thought, so with this young convert, from thence to the end of his life there remained a thankful reverence for “the spot” as well as a clear evidence of the moment of his first experience of comfort through believing, for religion came to him as a living thing—something to be enjoyed. He “believed with his heart unto righteousness and with the tongue made confession unto salvation,” publicly avowing his faith by joining the Wesleyan Society at Marsden, and receiving his first ticket of membership from the Rev. Charles Haydon in the centenary year of Methodism, 1839.

Now, in this conversion there was nothing mysterious or startling, it was simple and genuine like the character which was to be built upon it. But it contained lessons which furnished matter for many encouraging hints which he afterwards gave to others. For instance—he waited not, as many do, for some special moment when God would forgive him and change his heart, after which he intended to serve Him in a very appropriate manner, and lead a new life under some irresistible emotion. He took the current of spiritual desires when it served, nor waited for a flood. He did not try to obtain salvation by any labour as useless as rolling the stone of Sisyphus up the hill—he believed the promise and received the blessing. He left that prayer meeting believing that he was a sinner but that Christ died for sinners, and therefore died for him and was willing to save him; not at some future period, but then, and he rejoiced with joy unspeakable. He had not necessarily to wade through a “Slough of Despond” before he travelled the heavenly road. And one truth he liked to press home in following years to any serious inquirer was, that “some people make the entrance to the narrow way much more difficult than the Saviour did.”

It is true there is but one path, yet the methods employed by God to bring men to Himself are as varied as our faces, temperaments, external influences or the multiform operations of nature. For the God of nature is the God of grace, and as it is not every flower of the field that buds or blossoms as the rose ; so no two men are brought to God under precisely similar circumstances and experience. We have all an individuality, and it never troubled William Schofield that he had not been converted like the Apostle Paul or the Apostle Peter, or any other man. He always wanted to be himself, and when he was not himself he was nothing.

An attempt at Phariseeism with one of our young convert's temperament would have been a signal failure. He was not content with reformation merely, followed by an endeavour to overcome evil in his own strength. He sought and found through regeneration the help of God's spirit, to make him in all things "more than conqueror." He always admitted that "morality is good," but not good enough, and the point where it fails has well been compared to a fifty-fathom cable in a hundred-fathom depth of water ; when the storms comes, what good is it? His conviction was, that a man who bases his life on submission and obedience to God, not only fulfils every duty to man ; but possesses a hidden source of strength which remains when other motives fail. As one of the bravest and most severely tried of all Christian soldiers put it for our learning : "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

CHAPTER IV

THE YOUNG DISCIPLE AND EARLY METHODISM.

Break up your fallow ground.—HOSEA x, 12.

“The means that heaven yields
Must be embraced,
And not neglected.”

AFTER conversion, what next? Another specimen of the morning-cloud and early-dew goodness. Is this light to shine for a little time, brilliant as a sky rocket, and then suddenly to go out in darkness? Did he go bounding on the spiritual race-course, and run well for a time, and then give it up? Alas! too many do so. But they who begin in real earnest seldom turn back. From the very first this young convert inscribed on his banner: “I am bound for the kingdom,” and in after life that expression of his heart’s deep resolve fell from his lips times without number and no one who rightly knew him ever questioned its truthfulness. There was no trimming between God and mammon in his purpose. He perceived his duty and privilege at once to unite himself with the people of God, and

he lost no time in doing it, neither had he any second thoughts respecting Methodism as the Church of his choice. He was in earnest.

Dr. Chalmers said "Methodism is Christianity in earnest;" therefore to this new convert the ism was congenial. He had a ready appreciation of Wesley's definition of a Methodist, "a man who lives according to the method laid down in the Bible," therefore he concluded such a religion must be Scriptural, and said repeatedly "this people shall be my people, and their God shall be my God." He reasoned thus with himself, and the longer he lived the more satisfied he became with the usages and economy of the Methodist denomination, forming, he believed, some of the most beautiful features of a truly Christian Church.

The great variety of sects and denominations never caused him to doubt, or waver in his purpose. He regarded the variableness in forms and doctrines but as so much variety of symbolism of the same virtues and graces, and not as separations and isolations of Christians. And though he loved his own family of believers the best, and no mistake; yet he never allowed his sectarian partitions to rise much above his feet. He reserved to himself the personal liberty of fraternising with the universal brotherhood of heaven, or as he put it "giving the right hand of fellowship to all;" and the older the christian the broader his views became on this point, enabling him to recognise more harmony than discord in the diversity of creeds, having as their foundation "Christ and Him Crucified." He loved all who loved the "Lord Jesus in sincerity and in truth," and his opinion of those individuals who object to join any Church because of the variety of creeds, was identical with that divine who compares them to "a man who objects to

go to his dinner till all the clocks strike twelve together." He considered the Church to be the home, no matter what its name ; when faith is fed and love is warmed. It was just the place for him, as it is the place for all the newly born in Christ Jesus to be instructed and strengthened.

About the time of his conversion the Methodist Society in Marsden was just doing a little more than holding its own, but it had true signs of life and energy.

Rowland Hill, in one of his quaint moods, when preaching from a text which led him to speak of the different churches as a great house, following out the metaphor and assigning the rooms of the house to different denominations, said, "as for the Methodists, we shall give them the kitchen ; they must have a good fire."

Now, in many senses, there was something very kitchen-like in the homeliness of the Marsden Wesleyan Society when this young disciple first crossed its threshold. There was a good fire. There were plenty of the means of grace, and a good store of spiritual refreshments, not for Sundays only, but for the intervening days. The people sung very meaningly—

"Enough for each,
Enough for all,
Enough for evermore."

And their prayers and works were consistent with the song. Through the medium of cottage prayer meetings in the village and on the hill-sides, they promulgated the gospel of their Lord, and in this way it was carried to numbers of the rural population who otherwise might never have received it. Their meetings were of the true, old Methodist stamp. They were very lively seasons, and helped rapidly to develope the skill of this young recruit in religion. When one prayed, the others would respond to almost every sentence.

Some would interlace remarks, or give original comments by the way, until at times it was difficult to discover who was praying or who was responding, while others in the happy flow of feeling would call out and almost shout for joy: "Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!" Many would give form to their enkindled enthusiasm in some hearty "Amens," as if to waft the prayers to Heaven. They were an earnest little band of supplicants.

In some of their devotional exercises, while in praying attitude, a rickety chair would have proved a very unsafe and unsuitable thing to kneel before, on account of the vehement manner in which, at intervals, they brought down their fists upon it, even sometimes unconsciously driving it before them a considerable distance from its original position.

These are not exaggerated statements, but an honest revelation of a true Marsden sample of the old "kitchen" religion. Its adherents were men of simple modes of life, ard work, and earnest soul; and there were also amongst them many women noted for their zeal and moral courage. Most of the latter were advanced in years, but they rejoiced and laboured with all the ardour of exuberant youth. The women were, moreover, an important factor in the plan of cottage prayer meetings, and had gifts differing from one another which they exercised to their own good and the glory of God. It is said that one of them was in the habit of commencing her public prayers by thrice repeating the word "g-l-o-r-y" in a very prolonged strain, as if to lower down her excited spirits from their high altitude before she could give further utterance to her feelings in words! And as these signals usually called forth a variety of response the effect produced was similar to the leading

part in a piece of music—holding on one of the long notes, while the other parts contribute harmony with tones of shorter length.

Another of these “mothers in Israel” was conspicuous for her startling and original figures of speech. Doubtless she had a much greater knowledge of farming than literature, and it is probable she had never heard of, or seen, an English grammar. But she had some power of brain, a fruitful imagination, and “truth in the inward parts.” She borrowed her figures from surrounding objects with which she was most familiar. When praying, on one occasion, to be delivered from everything calculated to hinder the growth of grace, or disturb the fruits of the spirit, and steal away her peace, she couched her petition in the following words: “Save us—from all th’ pouhcats,*—an’ weasils—that run i’ th’ field hedges, ’ur onything else at ’ud bother † the crop.”

To the spiritually ignorant, these rough and ready metaphors might be esteemed as the essence of all that was ridiculous; but her contemporaries, quickly discerning her meaning, and feeling too the same desires to be cleansed from everything that interfered with the culture of goodness, readily added their loud “amen.”

At one of their meetings, which was held one evening in Peter-fold, when there was present a man of the name of Joseph Firth, who had a most powerful voice—it is said that when he spoke his gentlest it was like muttered thunder)—that such was the tempest of excitement on that occasion that the household cat was panic struck, and jumped through the window as if it had been helped by gunpowder.

Such were the “good old times,” of which veteran

* Polecats.

† Trouble, or disturb.

Methodists like to talk, and from a short extract from the memoir of this same Joseph Firth, who lived only a few years in Marsden, near the top of the Town Gate, we get another glimpse of the religious honeymoon of the subject of our sketch, who was seldom absent from these cottage meetings.

We give the extract verbatim :—

“On one occasion Mr. Firth and a few of his friends were holding a prayer meeting in his house. On the opposite side of the street there was a public house at which a ball was being given. Mr. Firth expressed confidence in the prayer meeting that if they united together in prayer, they could bring the people out of the ball room. They did so, and to their great astonishment the people left the ball-room and came to the prayer meeting.”

The prayer of faith and expectation was answered.

As we gaze at these men of the past we cannot gainsay their sincerity ; but believe that they were men for the times. There was no suspicion as to their being orthodox, specially on the most important point “one thing I know, ..hereas I was blind now I see.” They never got lost in the mazes of nature’s fixed laws so as to doubt whether God could answer prayer ; but kept on—

“ Drawing from heaven that sweet repose,
Which none but he who feels it knows.”

In their religion there was nothing of the pretentious mood, or forced and artificial feeling. To them, a prayer meeting was an altar for whose fire each one brought a brand, and the pile was made up of the added faggots of many enkindled hearts.

There was also an absence of sickly sentiment and the presence of strong and steadfast principle and resolute endeavour which our young disciple caught and carried with him to the latest day of his life. They

were truly training days for the strong. Half heartedness was then of no value and those who could not swim against the tide necessarily sank. These men formed part of the number of many fine, stalwart Methodists produced by Yorkshire dales ; who, when the denomination was struggling for existence, did valiant service for the cause of Christ. They spoke of their Sabbaths as “ market days ” and often did a good bit of spiritual business during the week. Instead of the prayer meeting they would sometimes get a local preacher to preach them a sermon ; when they would have a kind of informal service conducted by the preacher, mainly, but not entirely. It was not unusual for one who had been at these meetings to meet a “ brother ” on the following day who had been absent and tell him with gusto what a “ good time ” they had had, and say “ There was a heavenly breeze blowing—lad ! ”

At a meeting of this character held one evening on Lingards Moor, and conducted by George Sykes, a zealous local preacher from Helme, near Meltham, through press of circumstances there was not even a table come-at-able to serve as a desk on which to place the Bible. But the difficulty was bridged by the preacher stepping behind a chair on which there sat a man willing to be either a “ hewer of wood or drawer of water,” or even a temporary bookstand in the Service of Christ ; and to whom a hint was sufficient for him to tender the use of his back, on which the preacher rested the sacred Word from which he read and preached. And it seemed no cross to that man thus to accommodate himself to the condition of things, and hold himself in a leaning-forward attitude, meekly supporting the outward letter on his body, while its inward meaning was being conveyed not to his mind only but to all the little throng of household worshippers.

Examples might be multiplied to show what perfect strangers these early Methodists were to fevered nerves and weary hearts. The expressions of their experience were strongly flavoured with scripture and Wesley's hymns, which latter, some of them knew by heart; and for the benefit of those who did not, neither could read, they gave out *two* lines at a time, or sometimes *one*, when they sung; and as one of their number thus led out the hymn, another would betoken assent to its meaning by some deep gutteral sound, which at least kept up the key note of praise, though at times it interfered with the tune.

“The men of grace have found,
Glory begun below ;
Celestial fruit on earthly ground,
From faith and hope may grow.”

Though the earthly portion of most of them, was of the humblest, the Psalmist's words were sincerely reproduced, with original admixture, in their experience meetings.

“The lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and we've a
goodly heritage.”

And there are many who could bear witness that William Schofield in the evening of life's day never looked younger in spirit or more free from care and pain than when calling up these incidents of his life's morning with one who knew them well, William Dyson, the blind man, to whom he would appeal again and again, and say : “Ah ! Dyson, lad, those were the happiest days of my life.”

Their piety was not of the sort which burns itself out in the prayer meeting or the praise meeting. They thought nothing of walking ten or even twenty miles to hear an excellent preacher, and back again, thinking of his burning words and feeling a hundred-fold repaid for the effort. It

was interesting to hear these two men call to mind in joyous reminiscence, preachers' texts and sermons with wonderful precision, when relating the journeys which they took on more than one occasion to the Wesleyan Conference. To go to Conference they esteemed a great privilege—it was like bathing their souls in religious waters—to accomplish which, unfavourable weather, long distances on foot, or limited means never came into the reckoning.

One of these pilgrimages—to Sheffield—attracted special sympathy from the fact that Schofield had to walk the whole distance in a pair of new shoes, which, to use his own words, made him "lame as a beggar." Arriving in that town late on a Saturday evening, footsore and exhausted, with food and lodgings to seek, "rejoicing in tribulation," as "having nothing, yet possessing all things," upheld by the sweet anticipation of the coming day, which was Conference Sunday, they took gladly the pain of blistered feet, and thought it nothing in comparison with the joy which followed.

"And did you foot it both ways?" we once asked; to which one of them repeated the question with surprise, adding, "Certainly! what else should we do?"

Surely no thoughtful man could have heard that reply without reflecting that there is something in life better than ease, more delightful than pleasure, and more golden than gold. In these acts of self-sacrifice these men were as unconscious of any good they did as the lamp is of its shining. Happy men! But they unknowingly reflected much of the light they absorbed.

The first few years of our young disciple's Christian life had a great influence on all the future.

Wedlock is sometimes spoiled by a bad honeymoon,

and many a convert has been ruined by an unhappy start. But our young disciple started well. He put himself, like all true disciples, to the school of Christ for the honest purpose of becoming better—not better than his friends or neighbours, but better than himself. And having confessed Christ and joined the Church, he made use of the means within his reach to make “his calling and election sure;” and he manifested the spirit of every true convert’s inquiry: “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

And because we are able at a glance of thought to compare the early with the latter part of his life, we may be excused for imagining the Saviour’s reply: “Be stedfast, immovable,” and go forth as a joy-bearing agent in the world. And he went.

CHAPTER V.

CHRISTIAN MANHOOD AND MARSDEN METHODISM.

Trust in the Lord and do good.—PSALM xxxvii, 3.

“A peasant may believe as much as the great clerk—and reach
the highest stature.”

WHEN a man can be relied on, he becomes of consequence. When, if he says he can do something, he can do it, or that he will do something, men know that he will, though he may not have many brilliant parts, he is of importance in the world. His superiors respect him; his equals trust him; and younger and weaker natures look up to him and lean upon his example. Like a tree, sturdy and strong, such men become pillars of strength, keeping many a weak and tender climber from off the ground. The proverb says: “The strong man and the waterfall channel their own path.” And the path thus channeled is often trodden by others. The Apostle Peter said on one occasion, “I go a fishing;” his comrades at once yielded their weaker wills and said, “We also go with thee.” And when a man shows at every turn

and crossing in life's highway that, at least, he is determined in one thing, and that is to save his soul, there is many a craving tendril of humanity ready to fix on and wreath around him. In this lay the secret of William Schofield's usefulness ; he sought "first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," and his steady purpose assisted others.

But his character did not grow in a day. It was not mushroom-like—advancing rapidly to perfection, and but a tender plant at best. He had many a rough tossing and testing, within and without, before it was said of him, "William can always be relied on ; whatever turns up, or whoever comes or goes, he remains—like a beaten anvil to the stroke."

The Reform agitation, which shook the Wesleyan denomination from centre to circumference, left him on the deck of the old ship, and more attached to it than ever. There were times in his own personal history, when

the evil forces of envy and misrepresentation seemed to be let loose upon him with a determination to drive him out of the church ; but as the rock remains when the angry breakers have subsided, so, when his foes had done their worst, he was found "still holding on ;" and doing his best to help others, gently waving petty turmoils away with the remark—"I've long since found it out ; we cannot have all things straightforward in this world."

He had got "the root of the matter" within him, and from the first he took good care of the work of grace respecting his own disposition and conduct. He well cultivated his seed of religious truth, which contained all the elements necessary for growth, and he believed in his individual responsibility respecting the command to "work out" his

salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that God worketh in us, but not for us, influencing, but not performing.

He avoided what would *hinder*, and sought after what would *help* the development of his stature in Christ Jesus. This was very remarkable in his decided change of companionship after conversion, and not less so, when the time came, respecting his choice of a wife.

He was married in the year 1845, in the 25th year of his age, to Miss Hannah Scawthorne, and in his marriage he ran no risk of allowing light and darkness to dwell together. He was "not unequally yoked" with an unbeliever. There was not only mutual affection but perfect sympathy in all that was essential in religion—they were one in affection, one in interest, one in Christ—causing the event to have a favourable effect on all his subsequent history; and his example was not more commendable in anything than this.

Everyone is ready to say, "Beauty is only skin deep," and most people admit that—

"Handsome is she that handsome doth,
And handsome indeed is handsome enough."

But even with christian youths, outward attractions too often supplant the richer adorning of the mind and soul.

We have often seen William Schofield lay his hand on the shoulder of a young man, look him full in the face—his own beaming with kindness—and on these or kindred subjects speak a word in season, and the mutual pleasure would suggest the text, "A word fitly spoken, how good is it?" It is "like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

He "never cared much" for a female philosopher. He regarded home as that asylum in which a man first seeks

the repose of the heart, and where the jaded man sighs for sympathy. And if, instead of this, there is only the varnish and glitter of accomplishments, it is a sad disappointment.

The substance of his advice to the young on this important matter was—"not to be taken up with mere outside appearances. Let the attractions be real, whether polished or unpolished."

A cultivated intellect is good ; but a sympathising heart is better. The wife is invaluable whose chief study is to make the path of her husband an easy one, willingly performing multitudinous little offices to lesson his care, and in cases where there is scarcely bread for the family scorning to murmur, remembering with noble fortitude the vow "for better, for worse ;" venting her own anguish in private tears, trying to look cheerful when the heart is bleeding, bearing quietly her own burdens, in order as much as possible to lighten her husband's.

There was a period in the earlier part of William's married life that had a clouded side, and to which the foregoing observations have a relative meaning. His business of shoemaking was not very remunerative, especially as it became injurious to his bodily health. He had a naturally-strong constitution, which constant stooping over his chest tended to impair ; but he was never dissatisfied with his lot because he thought it humble.

Discontent makes the spirit sad, and all enjoyments sour ; but it arises not from outward circumstances, so much as from the condition of the mind. Ahab was miserable in a palace, and Paul was content in a prison.

There was an elasticity of spirit in this shoemaker which could not be easily suppressed ; and as he pursued

his calling, this was the sentiment of his song—

“ Let others mourn their humble lot,
Yet I will work and sing ;
For though the world regard me not,
My father is a king.”

Jesus once said, when sitting wearily by Jacob's Well, “ I have bread to eat that ye know not of.” And he who draws his happiness from within himself is better able to meet discouragements without. Hence our subject struggled hard with constantly recurring days and weeks of sickness. He was not the man meekly to submit to a doctor's opinion that he must have a change of vocation, until personally warned by an ever-increasing weakness of body. It became unmistakeably apparent that for his health's sake he must dissolve his connection with St. Crispin ; and the lap stone and the awl must be exchanged for some other means of livelihood. The anxious question for husband and wife was, “ What must be done ? ”

They did not forget to carry their cause to the Lord, and ask His fatherly aid, and many a time they unburdened their trouble in His ear, and received strength to endure. William's faith was severely tried, but it never failed. To quote his words, “ He did his best, and asked God to help him.” He was eminently practical.

He believed that God helps the man who helps himself. He never built castles in the air, and always had little patience and less feeling in common with a man who makes himself all religion, to the neglect of life's duties, and William has read many a lesson to others from that chapter of his own experience, to this effect : That a man who does nothing but pray never surmounts life's difficulties. Prayer alone will not pay debts, maintain credit, or meet emergencies in business. The call to “ take no thought ” is not a call to

evade responsibilities, but to trust in providence when the time to trust only is come.

He now tried other employments, and failed, and tried again, never yielding to doubt or despair—and like all good men in the trying hour he drew consolation from the Invisible. His religion was not an artificial cistern which dried and cracked in the atmosphere of blighted prospects—he felt and said then as we have heard him sing many a time since—not with much musical propriety, but with a melody of heart more melodious than the lute—

“ My God the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
The comfort of my nights.”

Giving “ forte ” to the fourth line of the verse.

He learnt the lesson of “ *work and wait*,” and never forgot it; and in the meantime his confidence in God and zeal for the Lord’s house were unabated, one proof of which we introduce to the reader, with another brief glimpse of Marsden Methodism.

In the years 1849 and 1850, Marsden Methodism was not very strong, although it had considerably outgrown the insignificance of its earliest days, when but represented by an occasional cottage service in the Planks about the year 1810. It was about the year 1815 when more people than could be crammed into one room of a small house, had the courage of Methodistical opinions, and a two-storied dwelling was taken at the bottom of Fall Lane, in which to hold divine service. A quandary next presented itself—how or where to place a pulpit, in order to utilise both ground floor and chamber, as body and gallery of their cottage chapel. But the promoters were made of sterling stuff, and were not wanting in

contrivance. As the Americans say, they did “their level best” under the circumstances, and erected a novel rostrum in a particular corner of the house previously set apart for an old eight days’ clock, which had been so tall that room had to be made for its head by cutting a piece out of the chamber floor. In that corner the preacher was placed, and enabled to see up stairs and down stairs at two separate glances. The furniture of this “Bethel” was neither extravagant in quality nor burdensome in quantity ; but the unpretending sanctuary was sacred to many as the place of their spiritual birth. It mattered not to them that they were a “byword” among their Episcopalian neighbours, or even the objects of hate and persecution.

In those days the spread of dissent met with a spirit of intolerance everywhere. A better state of things is prevalent now.

One Sunday morning, in the days of this cottage chapel, a man, Marsden by name, and also of Marsden birth and residence, and an ultra Churchman in creed, had set out for his own place of worship, but had to return home with his horse, which he found straying from the field. This made him late for church, and he then remarked to a friend, who was in the same predicament, “We are too late for Church ; I think I’ll go and hear these ‘Methodies’—any time’s good enough for their shop.” He suited the action to the word and went. He heard a local preacher by the name of Sheppard, and as he listened, his prejudices melted away like snow before the sun. The truth came home with a power he never felt before—he was convinced, converted, and made a complete surrender of his heart to God, and his sympathies to the Methodist people. From thenceforth—amongst those he once despised—he rejoiced, and laboured, and lived, and

died, and was buried. And the stone, sacred to his memory, that was placed over his grave still remains in the front premises of the new chapel, and is one of the very few relics reminding this generation of the old place and its worthies.

The first Wesleyan chapel in Marsden was built in the year 1824. It was a very modest structure, and was erected on the site of the present commodious premises. In it was developed a more flourishing church in which William Schofield was in “labours more abundant;” and it was when the cloud of his temporal prospects was looking blackest that this chapel had been cleaned and repainted, and the little society needed funds to meet the expenses already incurred.

It was resolved to procure the services of a Mr. Pibus, a very talented local preacher, who at the time was conducting special services at Stalybridge, in Lancashire, and residing temporarily in that town. This preacher was a road-contractor by trade, and it was no uncommon thing to see him breaking stones on the highway, in consequence of which he was spoken of as the “stone-breaker” preacher. He had a remarkable gift of utterance—he possessed an enthusiastic temperament, and had some revivalistic propensities, and though a heap of stones was often his only academy, and the bible his only library, yet with a heart fired with love to God, he was enabled to place the atonement in such a light, and the Atoner in a manner so impressive as to make men listen with beating hearts and swimming eyes, and he was successful in winning souls for Christ. Mr. Pibus was “popular,” and he must needs be invited to Marsden.

It was in the depth of an old-fashioned winter. The weather was of the coldest, a heavy snow was covering the

ground, and there was every appearance of a protracted storm. There was no railway through Standedge hills in those days, and for many reasons the hiring of a conveyance was impracticable. But the opportunity was not to be lost.

Where are the two men who walked to Manchester and Sheffield to hear great preachers, as unconcerned and unconscious of toil as going from one place to another in the same village? Do they stagger now at twenty-two miles journey, or wish to be excused on account of unfavourable weather? No! They have volunteered their services.

Very early one morning, while snow flakes, thick and fast, were filling the air, William Schofield and his sightless companion, who was his senior in years, set—

“Stout heart against steep hill,”

And in spite of friends’ entreating that “it wasn’t fit to turn a dog out,” they might have been seen battling with the pitiless elements over the Standedge mountain, which was already covered with snow.

They confessed to finding “it rather rough over the hill top,” but they arrived in Saddleworth, hungry and drenched to the skin, just in time for breakfast. Their hotel—if such it may be called—was the cabin of a boat, owned by a canal acquaintance of Schofield, the boatman generously sharing his own repast with the two travellers, who heartily enjoyed their entertainment on dry bread and cold mutton, without a drop of warm coffee or tea or any other liquid to “help it down.” Hunger made all the difference, and the meal was a banquet, in the strength of which they journeyed eighteen hours. In the boatman’s cabin also they dried their clothes, and after being refreshed were as happy as kings—and happier.

By a fortunate coincidence the boat in which they had “breakfasted,” &c., was just about to be loosed from its moorings in the wharf, and set out for Stalybridge. This was their destined port, and we need not say how well they “worked their passage” and earned their berth ; casting anchor at Stalybridge soon after the dinner hour, without even a feeling of weariness. They at once traced out the whereabouts of Mr. Pibus, and were very cordially received, besides securing his promised services. By this time the day was far spent, but nothing daunted, strong in will and unyielding in physical courage, hesitating not through the badness of the roads, or their need of food and rest, they resumed their journey to Marsden, returning the whole distance on “shank’s mare,” as one’s own legs were frequently termed ; and homeward bound, they had got safely through the “deep-cutting,”* and were passing Austerland’s turnpike bar as the house clock was striking one on the morning of the following day. They arrived at home half-an-hour later on, feeling in no wise heroic, but well pleased and satisfied at the success of their labours.

Who does not admire such enthusiasm, and honour the impulse which upheld them ? Even the selfish world bows down to such exhibitions of disinterestedness.

No good deed—no genuine sacrifice is ever wasted—even if it be mixed up with weakness or mistake—God makes it useful, present and future. And we cannot revert to that midnight hour and think of these two men fatigued in body but not in mind ; out in the storm, with the wind running riot over the misty hills dashing the rain and sleet in their faces and howling like a spirit distracted over the

* A portion of the turnpike road cut through the highest part of Standedge. Completed 1839.



“I HAD GOT SAFELY THROUGH THE DEDUCTIVE, AND WERE PASSING
AUSTRALIA'S FURNACE, THE COTTON-SHOP GLOVE WAS TAKING ONE,

moorland wastes ; without learning something of usefulness, and feeling that it is noble to be superior to petty indulgencies.

It was not religious infatuation. Religious infatuation means defective mental organisation ; but no such weakness characterised these men. It was not fanaticism, nor a smack of Pharisaical folly which actuated them ; but a real touch of the glowing influence which Cleopas and his comrade felt on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

Our limited sketch precludes the notice of many other occasions illustrating the sense of delight, overpowering the sense of duty, and showing how on duty's rough road they found innumerable beauties which made it a flowery path, giving to following generations a depth of practical conviction that even in this dark and material existence there may be found a joy with which the “stranger intermeddleth not”—a light shining more and more unto the perfect day, and shining brightest and best in life's darkest passages.

It was soon after this event that success crowned a succession of failures in Schofield's attempts to find new means of livelihood. An opening presented itself for commencing in the coal business, into which he flung all his energy and perseverance, and soon the tide of his earthly prospects turned for the better ; making him more useful in the cause of his Master.

For the change of circumstances involved no change of inward disposition—increasing riches did not mean declining graces, as is too often the case.

CHAPTER VI.

SPIRITUAL STRENGTH.

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their Strength.—ISAIAH xl, 31.

“There is an unseen power around,
Existing in the silent air ;
Where treadeth man, where space is found,
Unheard, unknown, that Power is there.”

THOSE only realise the meaning of the Saviour's words—“My yoke is easy and my burden is light” who serve God whole-heartedly. It is the trimming man only who finds the “yoke” hard and the “burden” heavy.

One of William Schofield's frequent remarks, in public or private, was, “It's true we cannot serve God and mammon : We must be decided one way or the other.”

His life was not characterised by striking events, but there was a continuous flow of peace and earnestness about it, for he made no conscious concessions to his spiritual enemies.

His new vocation increased his experimental knowledge in this—that as the world daily rolls in upon us we need a

strong hand to roll it back and keep it in its proper place ; and, as the breakwater resists the storm so he found meetings for praise and prayer and christian fellowship to be an effectual check to wordly contamination, and a sure refuge for the tempted ones ; sweetly proving that—

“ From every stormy wind that blows,
From every swelling tide of woes—
There is a calm, a sure retreat,
'Tis found beneath the mercy seat.”

“ Ah ! well ! there's nowt much about him, I'm 'fraid,” was his wonted reply, on hearing of any one who objected to attend a class meeting, or who raised an argument against it.

He had very settled convictions that class meetings had done much to keep up the spiritual life of the Methodist Church, and he deeply deplored any likelihood of their disuse ; and the “ nowt about him ” meant that such objectors were at least poor Methodists, if they were not indifferent christians. He believed the class meeting was a good test of membership, and thought it an excellent provision for the “ fellowship ” in which the first christians “ continued ;” and he recommended it as the best social help to faith, and regarded the attendance of its members, with few exceptions, as a very good thermometer by which to judge of their spiritual health. He said he could understand why a worldling or a formalist had no relish for such services, but was “ puzzled ” with a distaste for them in persons who professed a sincere desire to grow in grace—asking their “ way to Zion,”—and avowing to have “ their faces thitherward.” These were his words—“ For the life of me, I cannot understand a man enjoying religion and not enjoying a class meeting.” To him the man was a perfect paradox who regarded going to class as a kind of penalty

inflicted on him for confessing Christ—a piece of drudgery to be endured for becoming a Methodist.

He would say of such, “Poor souls, I pity them.”

The idea of “class attendance” being an irksome ordeal, inspiring moping and mournful feelings, like one sitting on a dung-hill, clothed in sackcloth, with ashes on his head, was a problem he never solved. For himself he found them tables well furnished with living bread and water, reviving his life with a new nobility, and his character with a new sanctity ; in happy contrast to the skeleton godliness which is ever crying, “My leanness, oh, my leanness !” His reply to the excuse of being “poor talkers” was, “Nonsense ! they can talk well enough when it suits them.”

In the market or the mill, when buying and selling, or riding their hobbies they were fluent enough, he said, and it was passing strange and unexplainable to him that they had nothing to say about the captain of their salvation ; or the joys and sorrows of their journey heavenward.

But he apprehended that when the circumstances of the world so appeal to the senses as to chill religious feelings ; weakening the faith and overclouding the spiritual vision, then the realities of the spirit world are too far off to move the heart or affect the life, and the means of grace become uninteresting.

He contemplated with dread the possibility of sliding into such a low state of grace as having the “form of godliness without the power ;”—of becoming nothing more in God’s vineyard than a kind of decaying tree, having the semblance of life but being only a mimic of it. He knew there was such an unenvious thing as diligence without devotion, therefore he tried to keep his soul alive to God

and not relapse into cold formality.

In class meeting, in band meeting, or love-feast, a hopeful and cheerful expression ever accompanied William like a gift of God and expectation was disappointed when he was present if he were not the first to take up the trumpet of praise to God's glory after the preacher or leader had laid it down. And it was no uncertain sound that was heard in his declaration that "Goodness and mercy hath followed me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

His remedy for a church at "low ebb," as he termed a state of indifference, was "Christian fellowship and much prayer;" and to any one asking, "How can we best promote a revival of God's work?" he would say, "Man! we should all do with marking over again, like th' old millers' corn sacks!" This remark had reference to an old cornmiller, who came periodically from a distant locality to some of the Marsden grocers for the purpose of marking his sacks afresh when his initials had become almost obliterated through wear and tear.

That man was a Methodist of the old school, and often joined his fellow religionists in their meetings when staying all night in the village. One evening he illustrated the benefits of class-meetings etc., by the duties and purpose which had brought him to Marsden, viz., re-marking his corn sacks. He said Christians needed marking over again frequently, with the spirit of Christ; because of the danger of losing His image after He had been "formed within them the hope of glory."

The circumstances which originated the idea were indelible, and the idea itself suited William Schofield well. He endorsed it, and the phrase became a favourite with him.

A quiet inspiration usually attended his own communication of Christian experience, and when he said in a manner peculiarly his own, "I know in whom I have believed," his listeners gave him credit for sincerity. The hesitating, halting, timorous "*I hope—I fear—I trust,*" did not belong to him ; it would not have beseemed him, but the "*I know,*" so humbly, thankfully, yet boldly uttered, was always befitting and pleasant to hear. He was never ashamed of his religion. He has many times said, "Religion had need be ashamed of me, but I am never ashamed of it ; bless the Lord ! it does both my soul and body good."

As a sinful man he was in Christ's School to learn the art of good living, and if he often failed, he tried again ; and if again he was overcome he did not "give it up" but again in a penitent spirit he tried to live better and nearer to God. If he fell into sin he did not stop there, but as quickly as possible rose again with new determination to "Watch and pray," and again urged his plea for salvation, endeavouring to walk more worthy of his "high vocation ;" and in the chances and changes which chequered life's history, he "endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

It was very evident he did not trouble himself with theories, or doctrines, or systems of moral philosophy ; he had a simple, clear belief in the deep and fundamental truth of Christ's atonement. To the words sovereignty, election, reprobation, predestination, etc., he would make a respectful obeisance and pass on, to realize Christ's loving help. He never lost his first impression that "religion is a personal something betwixt God and the soul ;" and seldom omitted the remark in his public addresses.

Above all things he was sincere. The presence of a

hobgoblin could not have been more oppressive to him than that of a whining hypocrite. The principle of deceit he hated perfectly, and a religious cloak was detestable. That sham and cant were nauseous to his spirit was very discernible in his expression—"Give me a man who is sincere, and I can do with him ; but these double-dealers, especially in religion, are a bad lot—they're nothing in my line !"

He was as far out of sympathy also with anyone who needed much coaxing and persuading, and constant urging and holding to the cause of Christ. To such, however, he would be very lenient and helpful ; but if he were pressed much for his opinion, it was—"They are only made of poor stuff, I think ; but we must bear with them a bit."

Considering that such natures were so different to his own, the remark was charitable.

The conspicuous feature in his own character was the *abiding*. When his name was announced from the roll-call, he was ready to answer, present; as a Sunday School teacher or superintendent, present; at the prayer meeting, or special service, or ordinary service, present. When the cause was popular, or when it was persecuted—when his help was needed for work or for pay—he was present ; and his presence was not a menace, like a frowning cloud, but a stimulant, like favourable weather to the farmer. And from the fact that not the meanest creature lives without touching some one, and in that touch shaping to better ends or to worse, and that every human being influences his companions for good or for evil, one thing is deducible, that this beacon light of "steadfastness" showed many of his brethren in God's family how he was enabled by Christ's spirit to follow His steps, and bear His cross, and serve Him. He was—

Strong in the strength which God supplies."

And one of the most important channels from which he received so much spiritual strength was the "sweet intercourse of saints," knowing also that his heavenly Father looked with a smile of approval upon those who "thought upon His name;" giving to such one of the most precious promises that shine out in the word of life—

"These shall be mine in that day,
When I make up my jewels."



CHAPTER VII

PRACTICAL RELIGION

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

MATT. vii, 28.

“We are born to do benefits.”

AN EMINENT divine once said : “Some people seem to have Sunday souls, that they can screw on, on a Sunday morning, and screw off on a Sunday evening and pack away with their Sunday suit.”

With the plea that “religion is religion,” and “business is business,” and “politics are politics,” William Schofield did not keep his religion for Sundays only, and try to shut God out of every other day of the week. He regarded religion in relation to other things as a doctor regards water in relation to his medicines—something very good with which to dilute his drugs, but to be kept pure itself, must not be mixed with anything. He believed a man who had no religion apart from business or politics, had no “pure and undefiled” religion at all.

In politics he was a sturdy liberal, and a warm advocate for the rights of the people. In municipal matters he was for a great many years before his death a chosen represen-

tative, and a staunch adherent to the cause of civil and religious liberty. He never lacked the courage of his opinions, not even at the risk of losing worldly gain, but exercised his civil rights according to his conscience and in the fear of God, by example teaching men to "render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's." He had a religion without politics, but no politics without religion. And he loved his denomination no less because it was purely religious and non-political, uniting its members in ecclesiastical forms and doctrines, but leaving them free in their civil polity. It could not be said of him that he lived too much in the future and too little in the present. His religion did not consist in going to chapel, singing hymns and psalms, and hearing and talking about heaven and the angels, without a word about "doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God." What leaven of goodness he possessed he took into the "lump," that the "lump" might be leavened; and he never kept from young professors the following truth: "Jesus prayed not that His people should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil;" and the substance of his addresses to young soldiers of the cross, was—"That the world is the place for a vigorous christian, and he is to be victorious in it, and he is a man most worthy to be called a disciple of Christ who exhibits religion as the right use of a man's whole self, and as the one thing that gives dignity and nobility to what is in itself sordid and earthly—and shows its powers to elevate the conduct of the individual and the community. He knew how to make a material shoe—and how in his own way to put on spiritual shoes to young Christian soldier's feet—*"the preparation of the gospel of peace."*

Through honest-hearted propriety, he himself com-

manded as much respect and homage when his face was thick with coal dust as when, on a fine Sunday morning, looking like some noble country squire, he was taking his favourite walk—his walk to the house of God. His was not a state of mind mystical and in active life unattainable, a hermit's heritage only, separate from contact with every-day life, and appropriate only to Sabbath days and special hours. He was just as ready and natural to talk religion, if occasion required, when moving about his coal trucks and horses, with working men, as in the chapel on Sundays with evangelists. He believed that the best sermons are the energies of life filled with principles of honesty and truth.

In some men there are stores of worth hid beneath a rough exterior, like quantities of precious goods packed away in a common warehouse, while there are other men with virtues of feather-weight, exulting in the front ranks of human society, who might well be compared to shopkeepers with all their stores in the window. Some of the latter class occasionally ascend our platforms, and even enter the pulpit while in comparison many of the former are unseen and unknown, simply because cleverness and goodness do not always meet in the same personage. These two qualities did not meet in William Schofield. He had neither ability nor ambition for cleverness. Providence never designed him to lead an agitation against a popular evil, and he knew it, nor made such attempts; but in what was good he did what he could, and knew he was responsible for no more than his best. In certain emergencies we have often heard him say, "Well, it's very little that I can do, but I'll do all I can," and that generally meant more than he gave himself credit for. He never built a pile of almshouses, or established an orphanage, but his heart kept time with those who did.

He believed and said that the truest greatness was the most genuine goodness, and, excepting moral worth, “one man’s as good as another any day.” Particularly did he despise the claim to any superiority of birth, unless on the score of goodness. To him birth and parentage were valueless compared with character and behaviour. He cared very little—some people thought too little—for the mere polish and veneer of society; and less still for being regarded as singular in his ideas. One day, hearing of an acquaintance who had been making invidious remarks in reference to the Oxford and Cambridge boat race, and who had expressed solicitude for the honour of the one crew because of the “blue blood” that was in them, meaning they were sons of the aristocracy, William retorted indignantly, “them and their blood : isn’t one man’s blood as good as another’s? Hasn’t God made of one blood all the nations of the earth? I know one thing, if we are to judge folk by what they do, the blood that runs in some of their veins isn’t of a very bad sort. I want none of it.”

He regarded no man as respectable in position unless he was noble in character, and the conservatism of the class spirit was obnoxious to him. He would say—“Tell me what a man is—I care not what he has.”

That part of Christ’s life had a special charm for him when Jesus took His place in the world as a son of toil, in an ordinary workshop, in the despised village of Nazareth, teaching the world that in essential manhood the poor may be the equal of a millionaire, and the labouring man may be as noble as the nobleman. The advocacy of such truths would stir the soul of William as effectively as the sound of the horn will arouse the thorough-bred hunter. He assented with all his might to the reasoning that there is nothing in a

smock frock to degrade, or in a paper cap to make a man a fool any more than there is in fine linen that which ennobles, or in a crown something to make a man wise. The noblest heart that ever beat, beat under a common workman's attire. And, in trying to draw the mental portrait of our subject, if we had not noted these dispositions we should have omitted some of his most striking features, He said sometimes—"I havn't the gift of the gab myself; but I know when a man 's worth listening to."

The broad outlet of the mind in words he had not, but his heart was full of many a theme which could only overflow in short sentences, short as proverbs, and which were spoken anywhere as surrounding circumstances called them forth. He was eloquent only in practice, like the good Samaritan of old, who was known only by what he did. And that religion is most practical which goes forth in deeds more than words, of piety and benevolence.

William's heart had a yearning for the poor. His faith produced works, and he maintained that the man who is able, yet who does not, help the poor is a disgrace, if not a stranger to Christianity, for it is said of Christ—

“He bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows.”

When in humble circumstances William often denied himself to succour those who were destitute, and in his days of prosperity he sympathised with distress, and willingly ministered relief. We have never yet ascertained that by look, or word, or deed, he ever made customers feel uncomfortable whom he knew were not able to pay for their coals; and when reminded of long-standing accounts to his credit, he would reply—"Oh, they'll pay as soon as they're able."

In the years 1854-5, when trade was bad, provisions

high, work scarce, and coals dear, William Schofield refused to advance his price, and when remonstrated with by a man in the same business, only replied—"The price is as much as the poor people are able to pay."

If every Christian professor's sympathy had been like his, Thomas Hood's words in the "Bridge of Sighs" would have been much less significant—

"Alas ! for the rarity
Of Christian charity,
Under the Sun."

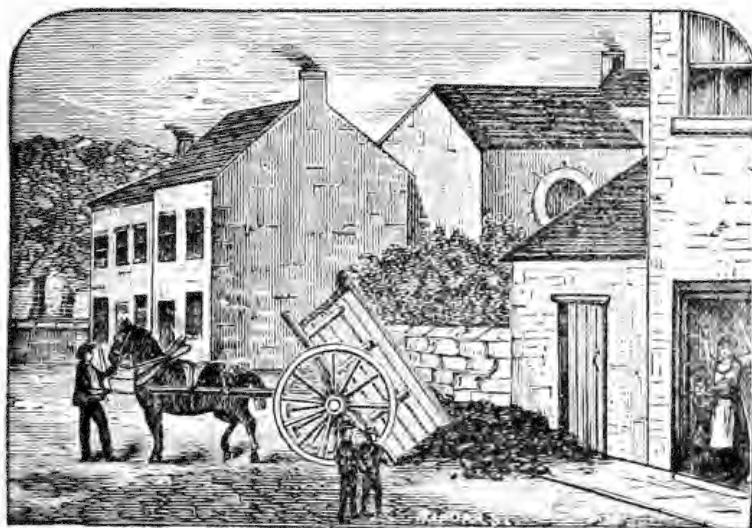
Everyone admires a liberal man, and liberality is an essential mark of a Christian's character. It was the first trait of the early church. And William Schofield did not wait to be rich before he exhibited the true spirit of generosity, which was not shown in the amount given, so much as the spirit in which it was done, and the sacrifice often involved in the act. He had

"A tear for pity, and a hand for melting charity."

Before he was well established in business, when he could afford to be lavish in practical benevolence, he would stretch out to the utmost the arms of compassion.

In the year to which we have referred there was in Marsden a large and poor family, consisting of father, mother, and a number of small children. The parents for a long time had struggled hard to keep the wolf of hunger from their humble abode, but it was at the door now, and it was a terrible encounter to keep it out. The mother especially was heroic in the strife. She trusted in God and did the right ; but all things seemed to go wrong; and those were "hard times." The winter had set in with unusual severity—the father had no work, and what help the mother could bring to the family by charing was small indeed. One day the cupboard was empty, and the little

children huddled for warmth around a fire that was dying out for want of fuel. In this extremity there came a rap at their door, and without further ceremony it was opened by the man who had knocked, and who stood with a whip in



"YOU MUST NOT LEAVE THEM HERE, SIR."

his horny hand, which, along with his dust-begrimmed face, betokened the trade of a coal cart driver. He enquired with stentorian voice—which caused every eye of the inmates to be turned on him.

"Does M—— live here?"

There came the quiet answer, "Yes."

"Then," said the man, "I'm right; and I've brought you a load of coals," pointing to his team which stood near the door, and he at once turned round and prepared to back his cart for unloading.

The woman, full of fear, stood in the doorway of her house, imploring the man to take them elsewhere, saying—

“ You must not leave them here, sir ! They’re not ours. I have never ordered them, and cannot pay for them ; you must be mistaken ! ”

But the coal man persisted.

“ I know that I’m right, missis ; and there’s some flour and summut* else here in a bag,” handing at the same time a good-sized parcel right into the house.

She entreated him not to leave them, but despite her pleadings and protests, he shot up his cart, vainly trying to assure her it was no mistake. And without further explanation he went his way, with the air of a man who has obeyed his master’s orders, and performed a good duty.

For several hours both coals and provisions were left undisturbed, for the woman expected the cart driver’s return every moment, to say that he had discovered he was wrong.

The day passed—and the night came but not the man for his coals.

Then confidence in the Lord and some unknown benefactor began to take the place of faithless fear, and the good woman gathered in the coal, and made an application of the other presents to her needy family, but not without some tears of joy and many a sincere, “ thank God.”

The family was never told who had been their friend in need, and happy as they were made by the gifts, there was another heart more unspeakably happy, because it was unsullied with fear—it was that of the giver. His was that complete happiness which is found in trying to promote the happiness of others. For of all the things that make music there is nothing like that touch of the heart which goes to

* Something.

the despairing one, and changes the murmur into a thrilling "thank God." We need not repeat the name so often found in these pages, or say that the above incident was but one of many in our subject's life in which was heard the true ring of princely generosity.

"That man may last but never lives,
Who much receives but nothing gives,
Whom none can love, whom none can thank,
Creation's blot, Creation's blank.
But they who mark from day to day
In generous acts their radiant way,
Tread the same path the Saviour trod,
The path to glory and to God."



CHAPTER VIII.

A SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT.

To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.—HEB. xiii, 15.

“ Does He require of you to change the heart?
Does He assign that work to human art ?

Go, do His will, believe His word, and trust
His love, His power, His wisdom, for the rest.”

FOR UPWARDS of thirty years he was Superintendent of the Wesleyan Sunday School, bringing his active services up to the time of the building of the new chapel in the year 1871.

It is worth while to give a momentary glance at this superintendent, for he had better qualifications for that office than at first met the eye. It was in the days of the three-weekly system, which system means three divisions of teachers, each division possessing a head or superintendent, and performing the teaching in turns, one Sunday out of three. A system well suited to times or places where a sufficient number of teachers cannot be found with self-denial enough to undertake the arduous duties every Sabbath Day, or

where, for want of good select classes, such means are adopted to retain the elder scholars by finding them a little of something to do.

During that period of thirty years many names appeared and disappeared on the list of superintendents, but there was one name always there—it was that of William Schofield. He was placed on the list when comparatively a young man, and re-elected year by year until broken health compelled him to say, “Nay, thank you, I cannot attend to it as I ought, and I'll not make a mock of it.”

What is the answer to the question which has often been asked—“How he maintained the position for so long a time under the established custom of re-electing officers once every year?” There was a reason for the unceasing confidence, but it was not in this—that there was a scarcity of men, or that he was the richest man, or the oldest settler, or that he possessed the proverbial patience of Job; neither was it because he was a preacher or class-leader, for he never was either.

Men who climb the ladder of success, have in the majority of cases none to thank so much as themselves and God, and we have to look past the vote which gave the claim to this superintendent, away to the character which secured the vote. Some of the best characteristics of a good superintendent distinguished him.

He was deeply interested in his work.

He could adapt himself to children's intellects.

He sought no vain-glory, but the welfare of the school.

He honoured the office with a consistent character.

He wearied not in well doing.

He was a pattern of punctuality and zeal.

He sought and obtained the help of Heaven.

One great secret of being able to interest others is to be interested ourselves. This was a primary qualification in William as the head of the school. There was an absence of that listlessness and dragging work, which if seen in a leader affects the whole school.

We have read of a traveller who went all over England and saw all the great sights for the sake of being able to say he had done so ; but having no interest in what he saw he remembered nothing, except a very absurd sign over a public house in Birmingham. And having “no interest” in the work makes many a teacher’s labours useless ; but an uninterested superintendent benumbs everything, and makes all his efforts a mere waste of force.

William’s heart burned under a sense of responsibility, and with noblest desires, and every teacher felt the glow. It was not a boast but a confession made on one occasion when, speaking in reference to Sunday School work, he said, “Man ! my heart and soul ’s in it.” He never hung down his head, muttering and murmuring something about how he might be enjoying himself at his own fireside, etc. He offered no begrudging sacrifice. It was patent to all who saw him, that he thought it was worth while to do anything for Christ, and prompted by true love, he kept his *head up* in his Master’s service ; and what he did, he did with all his heart.

He exhibited some native ability in speaking to children—they always understood him. Much knowledge was not necessary. It was the character of the man, the nature, the feelings, the disposition, which were important points, and in this sense he had all the needful information

which kept him ahead of the school. He did not clothe his ideas in grand phraseology, but in simple truths. In a very marked and plain way he could suit his advice to the varied events of life, and could make clear the children's duties to parents and sisters and brothers ; and the tears would often chase one another down his manly face, as he warned them of the evils of swearing, and lying, and Sabbath breaking, and all manner of disobedience to God, not forgetting to tell them of the love of Jesus, the plan of salvation, and how to get to heaven.

In a tribute which was paid to his memory soon after his death, by one who had sat as a Sunday scholar under his superintendence, there was this remark : "As children we thought him at times a rather cross man, but somehow we always liked him, and felt that he liked us, and meant our good."

His was not an office-seeking spirit. His religion supplied him with the highest incentive which can influence men, and which made his office a source of blessing to others, and to himself brought happiness and honour. The children under his care might infer to themselves that he was quick to note all their defects ; but those who have heard his good humoured remarks in private, know that it might truthfully be said of him as a learned pupil once said of his great tutor, "he saw all things but did not *let on*."

Respecting a very talented but inconsistent preacher it was once observed, "When he is in the pulpit he never ought to come out, and when he is out he ought never to go in." There may be cases in which perhaps the good name of some Sunday School superintendent is sullied in a similar manner, cancelling all his influence for good ; but such a remark could not have been made with a shadow of truth respecting William Schofield. There was accord and

harmony in his precept and example, and no one blushed to acknowledge him as their Sunday School captain. His oratory of words was not more eloquent than his oratory of actions.

In the desk or the street, there was the same tone of uprightness and affection, and if any of his little schoolfellows came across the path of their superintendent during the week, the latter could break away from surroundings for a little pleasantry, and greatly enjoy the digression.

And the little recognitions and familiarities did not detract from his influence in the school, for no one could bring order out of confusion sooner, or better command attention when he said "Now, all look at me—every one of you!" and they looked. And they often looked uninvited, not only while he told them some interesting story, but they watched his journey along the path of life, and among the many things they saw worthy of imitation was his unvacillating purpose. He was not a weathercock superintendent, whiffing about with every breeze, entering into office with a rush and a shout, full of spirit, and then becoming neglectful. He manifested that plodding perseverance in his "labour of love," which is manifested by a man of the world in the pursuit of earth's perishable treasures.

One of the greatest obstacles in Sunday School work is the irregular attendance of teachers. William Schofield often wished "that all Sunday School teachers were savingly converted to God." His observation and experience taught him that in too many cases those who were kept to the school by the smaller virtues were like a branch lopped off the tree, whose zeal in the end must wither and

die. He knew that "doing all as unto God" was a life principle—a root.

But his good sense would not allow him to discourage unconverted teachers, for he believed that every good work had its present reward, in proportion to the principle which actuated it, and if for lack of principle there was remissness in some, causing inconvenience and difficulty, he met the "difficulty" bravely and without apparent discouragement. He might feel much, but said little more than this, "Well ! if they wont come, we can't help it ; we must do the best we can without them."

But he never tried to do without the help of God. He felt the power of a great truth which he often uttered—"Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." He believed in the availing power of prayer, and betrayed in his petitions a strong desire that all the teachers and scholars should "see that one thing is needful," and that "they all should be gathered into the fold of Christ."

He had many mementoes of acceptable prayer, and in his history could find *Jehovah Shannah*, "The Lord hath been here," inscribed on many a cottage hearth, and many a Sunday School room. His simple and clear theology was got much less from books or sermons than from experimental prayer. He has often applied to prayer as a last resource in dealing with a very refractory scholar. There was no class room attached to the old school, but many times has he taken an unruly lad by the hand and led him out of the school into the adjoining building, which was the chapel, for the purpose of admonition and prayer. But the manner in which his firm and irresistible hand was laid upon the refractory youth, had kindness enough in it to suggest the text—

"Come and let us reason together;"

And after an appeal to the best side of the lad's nature, the two would kneel down together while the superintendent prayed, and that course was seldom adopted but its effect upon their perturbed spirits was like Christ's

"Peace, be still,"

to the boisterous waves of the Galilean lake.

Many cases are remembered in which the scholar and superintendent have thus talked and prayed and wept themselves out of bad feelings into good ones, realising in the highest degree that "there is peace in the presence of God."

By prayer the subject of our sketch often stepped between his trouble and the Sun of Righteousness, instead of allowing, by neglect of that privilege, his trouble to stand between himself and his Saviour. He confessed that it made all the difference whether he or his trouble were in the light or in the shade.



CHAPTER IX.

FORTITUDE

And having done all, to stand....EPHES. vi, 13.

“ Happiness does not consist in things, but in thoughts.”

WHEN William Schofield was soliloquizing one day he was heard to say—“ I love that place in my very soul, it is more dear to me than ever I can tell.” He had a few minutes previously been engaged in conversation with his wife respecting the welfare of the chapel and Sunday School, and when talking to himself he was telling himself how well he loved those places.

He was eminently *true* to his connection with the Sunday School. His interest amounted to a passion. His passionate love became a law of his being, occupying the foremost place in his affections, and becoming essential to his happiness. His habit of loving “ that place ” had become crystallised, for he had never restrained the propensity, and why should he? The propensity had never made him prone to melancholy, or the victim of some petty misery, or lost him self-respect, or made him misanthropic. It had had

an effect the very reverse of all this. Therefore a sensible man would be more inclined to covet than to sneer at his enthusiasm.

Sidney Smith said—"Let every man be occupied, and occupied in the highest enjoyment of which a man is capable." Amongst the young William found his highest enjoyment.

To him the Sunday School was the most congenial of any other sphere of labour. He filled the office of superintendent until it seemed natural to him, and many regarded his presence as indispensable. But he never thought too well of himself, and therefore was not discouraged when apparently unappreciated; for he was above working for mere thanks, and did not become weary, or take offence when people did not praise him. How was this? We answer the question by asking : How is it that the sun wants no thanks for shining, or that the flowers want no praise for giving off their fragrance? Is it not because they are things of nature, which can do no other than their Master's bidding? And in this "steadfast" subject of grace there was a principle which was of God—unseen it might be—but it kept him at work, and carried him onwards.

We must dismiss his Sunday School labours with a rapid glance.

The extent to which the happiness of the Sunday School children was bound in his own was manifested in ways innumerable. On the Sunday School anniversary-day; or on Whit-Monday, or any event that was anticipated with glee by the children, their joys or sorrows were shared by him with surprising sympathy, and not the less so as he gradually rose to an honourable position in society. With-

out any loss of dignity—among the little folk or the bigger ones—he “ rejoiced with those that rejoiced, and wept with those that wept.” The prosperity or adversity of God’s cause affected him more than his temporal welfare. Hearing one day of a number of young people who had joined the Church, he exclaimed, “ Praise the Lord, it does me more good to hear that than to know that my ‘ wine and oil were increased.’ News like that is better to me than if some one had left me a fortune.”

Most people would have preferred the “ fortune,” but those who knew him best believed his assertion.

He was consistent with such sayings, even in trifles. We have seen him comparatively unmoved when his crops of grass and corn were suffering on account of wet weather, but wet weather which meant grief and disappointment to little children at festive times gave him a touch of real sorrow, not on his own account, but purely for the sake of the children.

He kept his heart young, and consequently with the young remained a favourite and a friend. When beholding their frolic and fun, if it were at the proper time and place, he was seen in his happiest mood, and, if it were possible, the hilarity of the children was as much out-proportioned by his own, as than theirs his own body was bigger and his years more in number.

For more than a quarter of a century he was always prominent with a becoming pride among those who headed the school procession, when parading the village on Whit-Monday. Who else was present or absent, there was the well-known form of William Schofield. He was easily discerned in the distance. His gait was rather careless, yet graceful; but he was a fine specimen of humanity from the

physical point of view. Above the average height, and very corpulent, he looked more Samsonian than ever at the head or in the midst of children. He had a bright, honest, and open face, with a pair of dark, thick eyebrows, well arched and surmounted by a good forehead; the whole visage rendered more attractive by a pair of mild and merry eyes, betraying a happy soul. His appearance would suggest to a stranger that he was a man of natural kindness, but well able, if required, to maintain his position with firmness. When leading the Sunday School procession, his happiness was complete, and he looked the right man in the right place, "a prince among his people"—and as the train of teachers and scholars turned a street corner, it was no uncommon thing to hear a bystander who had caught sight of William, remark—"Oh! here come the Methodies."

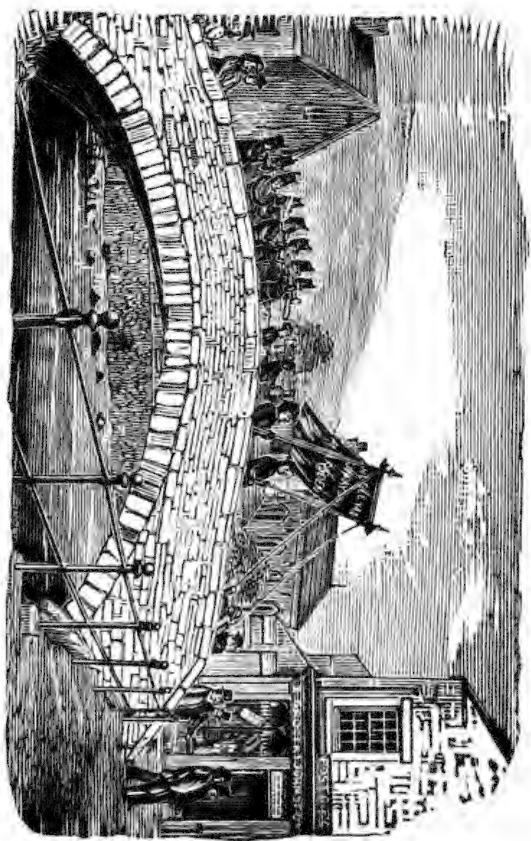
He felt as much noble pride at that post of honour when the procession only numbered sixty, as in later years when it had increased sevenfold. He would not have been shamed if there had been the most insignificant and feeble following; and in this respect he was—

"Brave on the toppling crags of duty."

And in his example was an epidemic of nobleness.

He was also a staunch teetotaler, and one of the pioneers of the temperance cause in Marsden. He believed in the immortality of temperance principles, when the nation, with few exceptions, ridiculed teetotalism as nonsense. Many times has he said both in public and private, "I would not care if the words 'Teetotalism' and 'Christianity' were written in big letters on my back. I can recommend these two things to *any* man, *anywhere*, for they will do *anybody* good."

He knew he had not the power of oratorical



SUNDAY SCHOOL PROCESSION.

"HERE COME THE METHODISTS."—Page 78.

advocacy, but if he could be like a light burning in a dark place, warning some, enlightening others, and encouraging *any* he would willingly be of such humble importance. He sincerely meant that if those two words—teetotalism and christianity—had been written with chalk on his outer garments, that for anything he cared about the oddity he would not have shunned the busiest thoroughfare, if by such a personal confession of their worth he could have answered the anxious inquiry of erring souls, “Who will show us any good?”

Our book is too small to introduce other names of level excellence to whom belong the honours of—

“Something attempted, something done,”

for the cause of Marsden Methodism. But there was one who stood so intimately related to our subject in more ways than his unflinching attachment to Methodism, that we must give him a passing notice. It was William’s brother, James—usually known as “Jimmy-o-th’-shop.” This appellation arose out of his keeping an old-established grocer’s shop in the Town-gate, which had been handed down from the parent Schofield. All who knew Jimmy well, knew why his home was designated the “Pilgrim’s Inn.” His hospitality, especially to Methodist preachers, knew no bound, and for the school and chapel he never thought he had done enough. His character was of the humblest, and most unpretending; but as firm and unyielding to what he believed to be the truth as any of “Daniel’s Band.” When anyone tried to draw “Jimmy” over the line of his belief, he had a habit of saying, “Oh! don’t tell me more than I know,” and the sentence was generally accompanied with a peculiar toss of the head and twinkle of the eye, as a kind of private signet to his assertions; which also was a sure sign that his con-

victions on that point of an argument were invulnerable. He was respected for his practical wisdom. His controversial style was very inoffensive, and even playful ; but when he had said, in quick-march time, “ Yes yes yes—I don’t believe all I hear !” and nodded his impressive nod—like a scholar who had added two and two, and was confident about the answer—it was well known he had entered the stronghold of his opinion, from which no amount of logic could oust him.

His name was generally opposite some of the highest sums for anything concerning the school or chapel expenses. He was also a liberal in politics, a member of the Local Board, and in other ways a prominent and useful citizen of Marsden. But he was of all things proudest of Methodism. He never looked upon the term Methodist as one of reproach, but as a title of respect and honour. He could be laced in no circumstances where he was afraid to make his repeated confession that in principle he was a “ Methodist to the backbone,” and with truth he sometimes added, “ Yes, an’ the bone an’ all.” Many of his utterances, tinged with eccentricity, have given a form and voice to the feelings of others, who have often prefaced an observation with the words—“ It is as Jimmy-o’th-shop used to say” and then repeated some of his quaint and homely phrases. None were more ready to “ do or dare ” for what he conceived to be right, and when he was filled with his subject in conversation, it gave an interesting action to his hands, denoting his depth of feeling.

Speaking in his house to one of his friends, on a certain occasion about the Reform secession, he said, pointing towards the chapel, “ As for me, as long as ever a

preacher enters yond pulpit, and I have my health, he (the preacher) will have at least one of a congregation, an' that'll be me? Nothing will ever drive me away," and he sealed the remark in the usual manner, adding, "Mind that, now!"

And those who minded it found it true. Whenever the chapel doors were opened for service, Jimmy was found in his place, fifty-two Sundays in the year, and at every service too, unless by serious illness prevented.

We need not say that he was present on Sunday evening, April 23rd, 1871, when the last sermon was preached in the old chapel by his personal and intimate friend, Rev. G. Curnock. On the following morning, before operations commenced for pulling down the building, Jimmy left his shop rather moodily to take his last look at the "old place," so fraught with precious memories, and he was standing his farewell against its hallowed walls, in the grocer's habiliment, when the building was photographed. Some people might call this attachment bigotry, but we wish every good cause, no matter what its name, had many such adherents.

Those who think themselves the wisest men never are so, but those who think themselves the happiest men are certain to be so. Self-enjoyment contributes to happiness. Jimmy was seldom discontented with his choices, and correspondingly happy. His frank and cheerful countenance was an index to his mind. He was loyal to Methodism to a fault, and when he slipped out of life on Good Friday, March 30, 1877, the Methodist cause at Marsden lost a champion friend. In the two brothers we saw two thoroughly honest men, not fitful and capricious, but abiding and constant—as good

inside as out, if not better, and the same all the year round. And in their rustic lives were illustrated some of the finest specimens of fortitude, which have been marked features of the world's most noble characters.



CHAPTER X.

INFLUENCE

A merry heart doth good like a Medicine.—PROV. xvii, 22.

“There’s none but has some fault, and he’s the best,
Most virtuous he, that’s spotted with the least.”

OME men seem not very distant relations of Ishmael, whose “hand was against every man, and every man’s hand against him.” Others cherish the lovely virtues, until their lives shed a sweet odour all around.

One of William Schofield’s virtues was cheerfulness. Amongst the many things he confessed he “could never understand” was a gloomy Christian. He thought the term itself as inconsistent as lying Christian, or swearing Christian. And he believed that persons are largely responsible for their own state of mind. He had no sympathy with necessitarians, who believe that no man or woman has freedom of action and will. His reply to such arguments was—“I never heed ‘em ; I know better.” He believed a man could follow good or evil ; that he could be right-headed or wrong-headed, right-hearted or wrong-hearted, according as he determined.

There was a sunshine around his own heart which

filled the eye with a beam of pleasure, and created an atmosphere of gladness enjoyable even to a stupid nature. He could laugh the heartiest laugh, spreading cordiality and awakening natural vivacity in all his surroundings. He had a keen relish for a healthy joke, and his robust frame never looked more fascinating than when, with a few friends he was enjoying a little innocent mirth in a way both rational and recreative. His inborn cheerfulness of disposition was cultivated by his religious habits, and there is no denying the fact that his joyous qualities were greatly improved by a good conscience—faith in God and a hope of Heaven.

He had many excellent qualities, yet he was not without his failings; an admission we freely make, thereby holding the light on both sides of his character as much as possible.

We have said much of his strength, and but little of his weakness, though, than he, no one more readily confessed, “I am only flesh and blood: I know I have my failings.” There was much about him to arouse noble aspirations and influence men heavenwards, but—

“The best of men are but men at the best.”

The Christian life would not have been compared to a warfare but for those seasons when the soul and body seem dominant in turns.

He was not an angel by any means, and he knew it. And in spite of watchfulness and prayer, there were times when he was overcome by a naturally strong and excitable temper, which cost him many regrets.

Being of a passionate nature, especially when young, he had great struggles with himself in his endeavours at self control, verifying the saying—

“ Unless above himself
A man erect himself
How poor a thing is man.”

He had a lively consciousness of his own weakness, and he was honest enough to acknowledge his blameworthiness, if he had allowed his temper to overcome him; so that he rarely passed an unpardonable boundary. He was a strong tempered man, and strong tempers have their evils, and sometimes explode in a variety of vexations. When close pressed by untoward events, he could present an exterior stern and rigid; but it usually reminded one of the milder ocean storms when the surface water only is lashed with fury, while the hidden depths are calm and peaceful. We have seen a kind word settle him as if by magic, and if he met a smile on his stormy way, his sternest features would relax.

There were times when his apparent indignation misrepresented his real disposition, which was docile, forgiving, and kind. Though he was very outspoken, and sometimes irritable and rough in his manner, his general deportment was consistent with his Christian profession. And any display of the uncontrollable never arose from any callousness of nature, but from that impetuosity and warmth to which his constitutionally strong impulses often urged him. Taking all things into consideration, and remembering that the only occasion his enemies could find against him was concerning his temper, we are constrained to say his virtues were manifold, and his failings comparatively few. His strong will gave him force of character, which often expended itself in earnest labour, secular and religious, making himself felt in whatever cause he espoused.

During some hot political contest in which he was taking an active part, he was passing the room of a certain

public house not far from his home, accompanied by a friend, when one of the rowdies with whom the room was crowded, and who were more or less under the influence of drink and political excitement, called out William Schofield's name, accompanying it with some abusive remark, a kind of dirt-throw at his reputation.

He was not in the mood to treat the remark with silent contempt, so instantly turning on his heel, and advancing right into their midst, he challenged anyone who had known him from his youth to "charge him with anything mean, dishonest or unjust." For reply there was a significant silence, and after he had administered a smart rebuke to the company in general and the offender in particular, he quietly left the house, in triumph over insolence and falsehood. So much for the strength of his moral influence among his neighbours and acquaintances.

As he went through life he learnt many a good lesson in patience, which fitted and prepared him in his riper ears for that aptitude which he possessed of counselling perturbed individuals, and administering antidotes to their disquietude from his own experience; assuring them that "all things come right to those who can afford to wait."

Amid his other traits of character the charity "that thinketh no evil" was prominent like a tower among surrounding buildings; especially as execrcised towards preachers and preaching, or anyone who was trying sincerely in any way to do a little good. His was not the mean mind that occupies itself in sneering, carping, and fault-finding.

"I can always put up with a person, however he blunders, if I think he means well and is humble—let a man try to do good in his own way!"

It was seldom indeed that anything more than this would come from his lips respecting the most humble attempt of any one who was endeavouring to think or speak a word for God. With that remark he has rebuked, if not silenced, many a grumbling tongue, or replied to querulous criticism by asking—"Do you think that you could do any better? if so, get it done!" Few things more readily called forth his combativeness than sneers from itching-ear-hearers respecting poor sermons, or slights thrown upon local preachers whom he reckoned among his chief friends, "esteeming them highly for their work's sake," and doing all in his power to bridge any difficulty or any discouragement in their onerous and self-denying labours. He looked upon the system of local ministry as without parallel in other branches of nonconformity, and declared—"So long as I have a home, they (the local preachers) shall share its comforts." He would make excuse for the poorest sermon by saying—"We cannot tell what sort of trouble or inconvenience the man may have had during the past week;" and then he would endorse some old pilgrim's saying—"That it would have to be a very poor croft if he couldnt get some nibbling."

The figure was taken from an industrious sheep finding food in a very bare pasture.

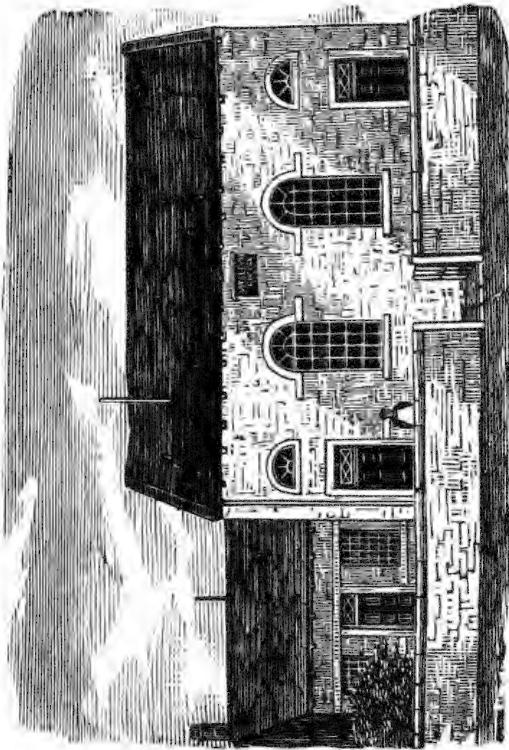
If a preacher had been great in head learning and soared in heights beyond ordinary apprehension, what William termed being "up in the stars;" he did not fret and get vexed in his mind about being left far behind in the limit of thought, he meekly waited till the preacher came down again into plain gospel truths : for such truths were his "green pastures and still waters," and were highly refreshing to his soul. He had ever a word in season for "new beginners," as

he called young preachers, and many retain a long and loving remembrance of his encouraging hints after they had preached their first sermon in the Marsden Wesleyan Chapel: hints which always tended to this conclusion—"It is not great talents that God blesses, so much as great likeness to Jesus." And as the small hair casts its shadow, so his little hints had their results. He was totally unconscious how, or when, or where, his little words and smiles, and handshakes, and helpful looks, and hearty responses, bore sweet and delightful fruit. He was unaware how his cheerfulness often acted on the dejected like the gentle breeze, or the still more gentle dew on the drooping flowers, and encouraged many in the effort to blow the trumpet in Zion. But he frowned unmistakeably on *pride*, he "would rather see the devil anywhere than in the pulpit."

For many years after he had been compelled through increasing infirmities to retire from active duties in the Sunday School, he kept up the habit, so long as health permitted, of repairing to the chapel every Sunday morning before the appointed hour for service, and could be found at the porch of the "sanctuary," not as an idle spectator, nor had he gone with any specific purpose, but impelled only by his love to the "courts of the Lord." A strange contrast to those who hurry in for two-thirds of the service only.

If the privileges attaching to the situation of "door-keeper" were, first to arrive at the post and last to leave it, then he was safe and right in so often saying, "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness."

No one could hang long on the skirts of the Church, waiting to be gathered in, or starving on the door-step until the bride (God's people) said "Come,"—if he knew it. He



THE OLD CHAPEL.

"HE WAS STANDING HIS FAREWELL AGAINST ITS HALLOWED WALLS
WHEN THE BUILDING WAS BEING PHOTOGRAPHED." — Page 83.

would by many means, figuratively speaking, fling open the door, put forth his hand, and draw them kindly in.

“Welcome! Glad to see you!” was not only written on every line of his face, but felt in his hearty shake of the hand. His grasp was a firm and sincere one; so different to the finger-end touch of cold formality. His greetings were the true overflow of a fervour he himself enjoyed, and they have sent many to their pews with pleasant feelings, under an influence of good caught from one whose spirits were exuberant in anticipation of having his “spiritual strength renewed” by “waiting upon the Lord.”

It was about the fifty-first year of his age, when failing health insisted that he must leave his Sunday School work to others.

He did so in perfect submission and confidence, saying, “You’ll do without me well enough; the Lord is never fast to a man. You must work, and I will give.”

He never withdrew his share in that bargain—his right hand did not “forget its cunning.”

He knew that the denominational system with which he had been so long identified had in it all the elements of perpetuity, and from the nature of things men could not be wanting to carry on the work. But the teachers by unanimous consent kept him in the presidential chair, and refused to allow him to withdraw his name from their list as long as he lived.

And a man has not lived without purpose in the world, when, in his name—no matter how small his world-sphere of influence—there is efficacy for good.

By virtue of the president’s office he had often to preside at ordinary and special meetings, some of them of an important character. And it was at such times, like

sparks from his warm soul, rising from the inspiration of the moment, that there fell from his lips expressions which can never die.

We may not remember all the words of a sermon, but who can say men's lives are not influenced thereby?

And this may be said of these obscure addresses of William Schofield.

Truth is truth, whether dispensed in lumps or fragments, and coming as it did from the lips of one who had been in stern contact with life for more than half a century, and now in honour had reached the autumn of years with ripened graces and matured judgment, it had weight and influence.

However homely the clothing of phraseology, the truth dropped like scattered treasure, and the rough gems shine more clearly as they are rubbed by time, and the voice of the speaker is silent in death. He could frown impressively if the subject required, or stretch himself to his full height, with his right arm extended, and snap his fingers with import when making a verbal crusade against wrong-doing. But more often his words would choke with his own emotion as he dwelt in his homely way on the beauty of good living or the glory of Christ's salvation. From personal recollection we are able to furnish the following stray leaves, all of which when newly dropped from the well-boughed tree were indicative of something practical or fragrant of the plant of godliness, on which they were grown.

§ § § §

"A man who lives to God, bless you ! he 's the happiest man alive."

" If you think that riches would make you happy, let me tell you, you are very much mistaken ; they are all right

where they are rightly used, but in comparison to religion they are n't worth namin'.”*

“What I have to say to you young men is this—the best side of a beerhouse is the *outside*.”

“Always tell the truth—do what's right an' shame the devil.”

“I know I'm none too good, and very likely I say things sometimes that are misunderstood; but if anybody is offended and will tell me, I'm sure I will ask their pardon! I bear no malice to anybody living.”

“If some folks cannot be everybody, they'll be nobody. I like those who are willing to be anybody.”

“A man 's a muff that is n't master in his own home.

“Some people think that everybody is hating them, when at the same time nobody is bothering their heads about 'em—they've something better to do.”

“I have God and His house to thank for all I have, and am.”

“If anyone in this world should be happy it is the Christian. What should hinder him if he s the love of God in his heart.

“Bless you! I'd lose all I had to-morrow before I'd part with my religion.

“Religion 's good for either level road or uphill.”

“Mark my words, you'll have to pay for folly, and dearly, too, sooner or later.”

“You'd better be content with a bit and be thankful, than have a lot of things to make you miserable.”

“I've very little patience with people who begin their days late; they 're late all the day, and late all their life—always behind.”

* Mentioning.

"If some folks would say less and do more, it would seem them better, an' they'd do a deal more good."

"What does it matter what we have to put up with in this world, if we're only ready for a better."

"I'm not perfect myself: I don't expect to find a perfect Church on earth."

"I wouldn't give much for any man's principles, if he is n't willing to pay for them."

"A man 's no business to give, who cannot pay his debts."

"Honesty 's the best policy. What comes off the devil's back will go under his belly."

"The Lord will never be in our debt for anything we give to His cause."

"When I give to God's cause, I invest in a good bank. I know it will be doing good when I am dead and gone."

"The Lord can send for me when he likes ; I'm ready to go, or willing to stay, as He sees fit. I've placed myself in His hands, and He can do what seemeth Him good."

§ § § §

Without adding more, we are constrained to ask—"Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" This leafage need not be increased to show the character of the tree. They were dropped from a mind at least well-furnished with the knowledge how real, life is; and how near, God is. The sayings were not startling or profound: but there was a certain undefinable humanness in them, contributing to their immortality.

There is one thing we never heard him do—he never tried to defend Christianity. He never admitted it had a weakness, and therefore in his opinion it needed no defence.

He would recommend it ever, but defend it never. He could never believe a man was sincere in saying, "There is no God." He believed there were far more hypocrites in professed infidels than in professed Christians.

He duly proportioned his thought to body and soul.

Publicly or privately he strongly condemned both random living and random giving.

Personally he neither neglected due investments for his family nor investments in God. And when he came to die what he had left for others was in the hands of others, but his self-investment in "giving to the Lord" came to his own account. Whether he left much or little behind him he laid up something before him—he laid up treasure in heaven—treasures safe to all eternity



CHAPTER XI

SUFFERINGS.

As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.—II COR. vi, 10.

“ Ill that God blesses is our good,
 And unblest good is ill ;
 And all is right that seems most wrong,
 If it be His dear will.”

THE Sabbath morning before President Garfield was shot, he (the president) heard a sermon which affected him very much, and when in conversation with a friend during the afternoon he said—“ What is all this world compared with the repose of the spirit in “a man’s body? There is where we are to look for peace “that the conquest of the whole world will not give us. A “man who keeps his soul free, and turns to his God in contemplation frequently, is the wise and happy man.

“ A touch of nature makes the world akin.”

William Schofield kept his soul free, and the way in which he would have responded to Garfield’s sentiments if he had heard them uttered is better imagined than expressed. A kindred spirit would have been recognised. The fervency of the senator was not more genuine than that of our humble

citizen. Many hearts sighing in secret for happiness might have learnt from our subject under suffering that the best cure for low spirits in addition to taking care of their health is to—"Trust in the Lord and do good."

"These things have I spoken unto you that ye might have peace; in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer."

William was reconciled to the heritage of "trouble" because of the superabundant equivalent he found in the "peace," and when hearing the above scripture quoted he often thought aloud—"To be sure——we have peace."

It is an easy thing to be cheerful amidst comfortable circumstances, and when all the surroundings are conducive to joy. Cheerfulness of this sort is not particularly meritorious. But there is something truly grand in a sunny heart, and a kindly face in spite of pain, disease and suffering. We read of the early Christians rejoicing in tribulation, and we have seen him of whom we write exhibit the power of faith in mental and physical affliction, so as to arrest the thoughts even of careless souls as stars attract attention in the darkness of night.

For several years before his death he suffered much bodily pain, saying sometimes, "It is as if someone were cutting me with knives," but to the end of his life he maintained that general and habitual cheerfulness which so favourably impressed all who came within its influence, the fragrance of which years can never steal away.

A defeated candidate for Parliament once said in a neighbouring town—What is our religion worth if it does not console us in trouble?" William Schofield had ever spoken of religion as "good under all the circumstances of life" and if it now had failed him in the hour of

suffering and trouble, we would have condemned its mention to perpetual silence. But it did not. He never unsaid by word or deed, when smarting under the rod of affliction or when pressed under the load of trial, what he had fearlessly declared when in good health and strength.

The malady which eventually caused his death (stone in the bladder) was once spoken of by an eminent medical man as “a constant source of annoyance to the patient, producing an almost irresistible temptation to petulance and grief, and irritability of temper: requiring the greatest consideration and forbearance on the part of those with whom he had to do and be.”

He was a long and painful sufferer. It would draw pity from the most callous to know the fearful agonies which at times wrung his frame to distraction. After all, it is wonderful he showed so few outward signs of suffering. From his genial manner, so long as he could move about it was difficult to conceive that for years before his death he was seldom, except when asleep, insensible to bodily pain. And when he became confined for the most part of his time to his room, to see him in his chair, his placid features in repose, no tremor in his voice, no knitted brow, the whole frame apparently at ease, and the man talking about anything that came up, one could scarcely think that he endured pangs which were all but mortal.

His faith was made “perfect through suffering.”

It was once said of him by one of his ministerial visitors—the Rev. J. Wood—“William Schofield must have ‘had extraordinary grace, and plenty of it; it lay upon him ‘like the dew upon Mount Hermon, and he was a very con-‘vincing proof that grace can do more for a man than most ‘people have any idea of, when it can thus strengthen the

"nerves in a paroxysm of pain and send peace thrilling
"through the soul, making us think that after all Wesley
"was not far out when he said—

" Labour is rest and pain is sweet,
If thou, my God, art here."

If anyone could be justified in saying, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest," William Schofield was one of the number. But by those who watched constantly and lovingly by his side we are assured there was no repining or murmuring at God's dealings. The periodical passages of the stone were times in which he endured excruciating agony, but in the meantime, he would often say, "Well—if it be God's will that I must go this way—then—His will be done!"

Some men suffer like Stoics, but he suffered like a Christian. Some sink below the cause of their suffering, but he rose above it ; and his resignation was a practical sermon from the text—"More than conquerors." To any friend entering his sick-room with the customary salutation, "Well, William. How are you?" he would with a smile reply, "I'm very well for me to be." His reply being interpreted meant, that he was the subject of a three-fold malady, inflicting on him incessant physical suffering, but otherwise he was "very well." Notwithstanding, there was no pulling of wry faces, followed by a piteous wailing about his sorrows. And one could not leave his presence after a pleasant chat and witnessing the sharp strain his ailments made on his endurance, without admiring his triumph over the weaknesses and errors of our poor wayward nature, and meditating on the contrast of his experience to the peevish repinings of those who have outlived their enjoyments, the shallowness of whose life of pleasure is betrayed in the heart-wrung expression, "All is vanity and vexation of

spirit." William Schofield's pleasures had not left him with feelings and reflections like these, but with reflections as different as light from darkness.

There is a provincial saying, "It seldom rains but it pours," meaning, troubles come in a troop, messengers of ill tramp on each other's heels, and press like a crowd.

It was a secret disappointment known to few besides himself when for a period of two years William could not through peculiar infirmity attend his weekly class meeting. It was a genuine trouble when he was kept away from the public worship of God; for this had become a confirmed habit and pleasure. No path was so pleasant to him as that which led to the house of prayer. And now a cruel disease, in spite of great skill and untiring care to check it, was pursuing its slow and certain course in his body, as if determined to kill its victim deliberately.

About this time there came shadows over the little society at Marsden of which he was the recognised head, and of the purity of which he was more jealous than of his own temporal welfare. But stroke followed stroke. At a time when, humanly speaking, he surely had trouble enough already, there fell upon him a succession of pecuniary losses, attended with grief beyond our province to speak of. The mental and physical distress seemed to vie for supremacy. Yet he never once doubted the goodness of God, or faltered in his opinion that God is—

"Good when He gives, supremely good,
Nor less when He denies,
For curses from His sovereign hand
Are blessings in disguise."

However deeply affected himself by his sufferings, he maintained, with trifling exceptions, a comparatively serene exterior, which under the circumstances was cheering and fascinating,

like a gleam of sunlight dispelling gloom. And his replies to friends who would have condoled with him amounted—though with no intent—almost to a rebuke of their own littleness of faith.

“Oh, the Lord ’ll lay no more on me than I’m able to bear,—perhaps my troubles are sent for some good end, I cannot tell—it certainly feels hard, very hard to bear sometimes; but all things work together for good to them that love God—an’ I love Him—an’ I cannot but believe His promise.”

The answer of his lips and his life to that human gaze which wondered why he did not sink under his load of sorrow, was, “how can I sink through rock?”

There were few better instances of that sacred joy of victorious faith which says, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” David Grey’s lovely words,—

“God is love, and I have faith,”

were reproduced by William Schofield under suffering in a manner at once touching and beautiful. He had well nigh a martyr’s sufferings and a martyr’s grace to comfort him. And the heroic examples of such men in enduring suffering with apparent composure become a source of courage to succeeding generations, and not unseldom men resign themselves composedly to their fate of pain, when supported as it were by the shades of men who have endured such things before, and whose memories survive to soothe and purify and bless us.

“*The rain descended and the floods came,
And the winds blew and beat upon that house,
And it fell not,
For it was founded upon a rock.*”

CHAPTER XII.

R E S T

Neither shall there be any more pain.—REV. xxi, 4.

“In sickness and in health, till death us do part.”

LIFE'S evening takes its character from the day which has preceded it. The life we have poorly pourtrayed was a practical comment on the words, “Rejoice in the Lord alway,” in sunshine or shade, in sickness or health, in life or in death.

William Schofield had tried to do his duty in life, and his duty had been his delight. “The way of duty is the way of safety” had been one of his simple and favourite maxims, and by patient effort in this path in a limited sphere of acquaintance, he had accomplished some good work in a very quiet and unobtrusive way, giving many a bias towards goodness, and exercising an influence which went on propagating itself in various consequences. To the very last he maintained his simplicity of character.

He had never given glorious recitals of his religious experience, but, what was better he had sustained it by habit and conduct. His ardent attachment to his Master's cause had never waned ; and as the tree when it is cut down falls in the direction in which it has grown ; so men generally close their lives in death according to their leanings up to that important hour. It was so with William Schofield.

At the Sunday School Christmas festival of 1879, he was very much affected in the address he gave as chairman of the meeting, a post which he had filled for a great number of years, and where his venerable presence became increasingly welcome. He spoke as one who was finishing his day's journey and wished to crowd into his last opportunities the choicest advice he could give, for night was coming on ! He said—"In all probability this will be the last time I may have to occupy this position : but let me beg of all you young folks to give God your heart in early life—get religion—it will do you good—I know it—my time cannot be long here—and—." He would have said more but his feelings choked his utterance, and the momentary silence was even more effective than words.

His surmise was correct !

Death was now seen in the back-ground of his every earthly prospect, though he was kept longer than he anticipated in the vale of suffering—a vale which must have been gloomy indeed had it not been lighted up with the company of Him who is the "Light of the World." His confidence and hope found expression in words he adopted seasonably, "I *know* that when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, I *have* a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The thought of Death was never a gaunt spectre to him, haunting his life and detracting from innocent pleasure, and proving a dread to his soul. His reflections on death had a characteristic cheerfulness. His thoughts were never sad in the contemplation. He did not speak of it as a "dark river," or a "cold flood," or any other mistaken figures of speech, which give false and unreal conceptions concerning it. He agreed with Rowe—

"Death is the privilege of human nature,
And life, without it, were not worth our taking."

"I shouldn't like to think that I had to stop here always," he has often said, or "There 's nothing worth living for here, except to live to God and do a bit o' good in the world." He believed that an earthly immortality would have been a curse, and that death was as fitting in its way as birth. If a man must live always let it be in heaven. He spoke of it as a *Rest*, or as the most epigrammatic of the apostles put it, "Absent from the body, present with he Lord."

At the Whitsuntide gathering of 1880, for the first time in a period of forty years, he was compelled to be absent. The disappointment was mutual—to William it was a *cross* to be borne. As the scholars and teachers assembled in front of his room and sung in their accustomed way, he rose from his chair and as he looked with tearful eyes through the window, he observed in faltering accents to a friend who was near him—"To me ——— that's the grandest sight and sound on earth;" then he resumed his seat, overcome with feeling, saying, "God bless them; I don't think I shall see their pleasant faces or hear their sweet voices any more in this world, but I hope to meet you all in heaven."

In spite of increasing debility the old courage remained. He manifested the same keen interest in the

affairs in which he could no longer take an active part, and showed the same genial kindness to all who were helping on the work.

But deeper and darker grew the shades of his affliction. One day he said to his wife, “ I should just like to live to see our new chapel out of debt ” This was said in reference to some improvement which had recently been made, and his old love for the “ Lord’s house ” tempted him for a moment to look back to life and health, with a desire to be spared a little longer that he might be useful.

But the signs of returning vigour grew fainter and fainter ; nature sank, but the soul triumphed. For some time his family had been struggling to resist the diabetes, with which disease also he was threatened ; and often when urging him to take the required medicine, he would say—

“ This complaint (the diabetes) is taking me very gently away, if you will only let it ; and if you stop this, there’ll be something else—perhaps far worse.”

It was eventually seen that those words were prophetic.

On Sunday evening, November 28th, 1880, at a considerable amount of self-sacrifice and risk of health, and with a determination at all hazards “ to go,” he attended the chapel, and sat in his accustomed place for the last time. His pew was right in front of the pulpit, which that evening was occupied by the writer of this sketch, who noticed throughout the service that William was deeply affected, as if some pent-up feelings had suddenly broken loose. When the congregation sung the last hymn (No. 799, Wesleys’ collection), he wept afresh, seeming specially moved and impressed during the singing of the third verse of the hymn—

“My Sabbath suns may all have set
My Sabbath scenes be o'er
The place at least where we are met
May know my steps no more.”

It afterwards transpired that his overflow of feeling was a portion of the same spirit which hundreds of years before had found expression in the memorable words—

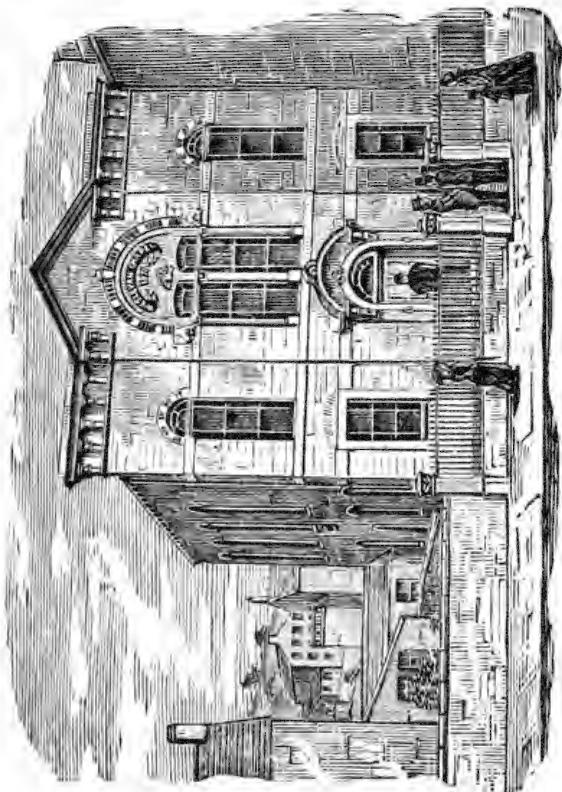
“Oh, that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain
of tears, for then would I weep day and night for
the daughter of the slain of my people.”

He also seemed to realise that his work on earth was done, and that the gracious invitation “Come up hither” had already been issued. His familiar response—never formal or ostentatious, but sincere and musical—was to be heard in the chapel no more. The presence which had often cheered preacher and people alike was withdrawn from that house for ever; his last happy hour in the earthly sanctuary was spent.

At the Christmas school festival of 1880 he was not filling the old post, but was on a bed of “weariness and pain.” His absence was like the absence of a dear old parent from the consecrated corner of the homestead at the annual Christmas gathering.

The diabetes had been cured, but now his other complaint had become appalling, and in spite of every effort to arrest it, the worst apprehensions were realised. It was the opinion of his local medical attendant that there were no hopes of life unless he underwent a surgical operation.

On January 19th, 1881, three competent professional men, after a careful examination of the patient in his own home, asked him if he were willing that they should operate?



THE NEW CHAPEL.—1871.

"GLAD TO SEE YOU!" WAS NOT ONLY WRITTEN ON EVERY LINE OF HIS FACE,
BUT FEIT IN HIS HEARTY SHAKE OF THE HAND.—Page 93.

He said, “is there no other chance of life?”

They replied very courteously, but firmly, in the negative.

Then yielding to the entreaties of friends, he said, with evident composure and self-surrender—

“Very well—then,—you must leave me alone a few minutes for prayer.”

Humanly speaking, he was left alone—but he was not alone, for God was with him.

In that short space of communion with God he calmly placed himself in his heavenly Father’s hands, and received the sustaining assurance that should the result of the operation prove fatal to natural life—all was spiritually “well.”

The surgical gentlemen shortly returned, and William said—“All right—I’m ready.”

We draw the curtain over the details of suffering.

As the last moments of suspense in that appointed hour glided by there were many anxious inquirers respecting the present and prospective result. During the physical prostration that ensued, the patient’s mind was peaceful and confident. Hopes of ultimate recovery revived only for a few short days. The sad fact that death was inevitable was not apprehended at once, but soon the evidence was too convincing; the doctor shook his head ominously, and in the gentlest manner possible intimated “a hopeless case.”

This was no surprise to the patient: he had suffered much, but now the *rest* was at hand. He had many strong ties to earth, but so soon as he knew that his time to leave them had come, there was no complaining—it was a message of love. He believed life would soon be over, but that did not trouble him. His religion was not to seek

when he most needed it, and those who visited him or ministered at his bedside saw the peaceful end of one who had walked the path of life with his lamp trimmed, and when the voice was heard—

“Behold the bridegroom cometh”

there was no confusion, but peace. He was visited by many of his friends, and their presence gladdened him. Some knelt at his bedside and prayed, and as they pleaded,

“Say ye to the righteous it shall be well with him”

He gave a gentle but true echo to the text, “Well with him?—Yes.”

On Monday, January 24th, 1881, he sank into a stupor, waking slightly at intervals, but noticing little. Sometimes his lips were seen to move as if in conversation; then there would be a settled stillness, as of one waiting for reply. During the night following, on one occasion when his lips were in motion, his wife thinking he was trying to ask for water to quench his thirst, bent down her ear to catch if possible the faltering and feeble accents.

He was praying his last prayer, and uttering his last words, which were these—“Come—Lord Jesus,—come—quickly—and take me—to Thyself.”

In a few hours more the prayer was answered. There were signs of returning consciousness, until the following day but each time of shorter duration. His eyes remained closed for longer intervals, for it was unmistakeable that the sleep from which no mortal ever wakes was coming upon him—and it was coming as peacefully as the slumber of an infant when in the tender arms of its mother.

About two o'clock in the afternoon he cast one upward glance, accompanied by a slight effort to raise himself, as if listening to something that none else

heard—then the head dropped—the breathing ceased—the weary wheels of life stood still—There was silence—broken only by the sob of a widow—William Schofield was dead !

His ransomed spirit had returned “to the God who gave it,” and peace was written on every lineament of his countenance. It was as if the Master had come and laid His hand on His servant’s heart to still its beating, and the servant had replied—

My Lord, I am ready to go with Thee.

We need not speak of grief-stricken hearts, or of little circles in society where a star of geniality seemed to have fallen from the social firmament, leaving the spot for the time being dark and cheerless.

His funeral took place in the Marsden cemetery on the Friday following his death. It was a simple and sorrowful ceremony.

His remains were carried to their last resting place by local preachers and Sunday School teachers. The Church of England burial service was read by the Rev T. Whitney, incumbent, after which the Rev. Amos Dyson, Wesleyan minister, briefly addressed the mourners on their deceased friend’s life, and work, and worship, and suffering ; giving seasonable consolation from the divinely-inspired promise—

“ Neither shall there be any more pain.”

There was the last look into the open grave—a look so powerful to break loose all stifled feeling—and all that was of an earthly character pertaining to the subject of our sketch was ended.

Amid the oppressive stillness, someone softly said—

“ He’s better off,”

and many a heaving heart was upborne by the thought.

“ No more shall wasting sickness
O'er him its shadows cast,
His weary day has ended
The tired one sleeps at last.

So deep ! no sound may wake him
So sweet ! no griefs appall,
For on the floor of Heaven
No bitter tears may fall.”

“ His work is done, bravely and nobly done,
And though on earth no longer we may his face behold
Nor hear his wise monitions as in days of old.”

“ He is not gone for ever
We shall meet to part no more,
In the King’s great presence chamber
Away on the golden shore.”



CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.

This leaf also shall not wither.—PSALM i, 3.

“ Death hath no magic love’s tender ties to break,
Hands he unclasps with separation tragic—
But hearts he cannot shake.”

A GOOD life is never out of season, and its influence never wholly passes away. Many were the tributes of respect paid in various forms to William Schofield’s memory—for many had been helped by the atmosphere of his soul.

The following paragraphs appeared in the Marsden column of the Huddersfield *Examiner*:

January 29th, 1881.

“ Another Marsden worthy has gone to his rest. Mr. William Schofield died at his residence at two o’clock on Tuesday afternoon. Mr. Schofield was born April 5, 1820. He became a member of the Wesleyan body in 1839, and actively engaged in Sunday school work. In

“a few years he was appointed superintendent of the Sunday School, which position he held for upwards of forty years. Wesleyanism in Marsden owes much to the deceased. He and his older brother James were amongst its most generous supporters. Physically Mr. Schofield was a fine specimen of a stalwart Englishman, and he was equally robust in his politics. Mr. Schofield was as outspoken in speech as he was thorough in action. For many years he has been a useful citizen and public benefactor. To every good work he was a cheerful and liberal giver. While taking an active part and his full share of duty in connection with the religious body to which he belonged, he also in parochial business, and in all needful reforms, rendered willing help. For many years he was a member of the Marsden-in-Almondbury and Marsden-in-Huddersfield Local Boards, and invariably supported a policy of progress and improvement. He also was a trustee of the Town School, and a generous benefactor. With Mr. S. Hill he established the first temperance society in Marsden. He only slackened in efforts for the public good when compelled to do so by failing health and a painful disease. He was an upright man, true and just, and generous in all his dealings ; and the religion which he professed and deeply cherished had no more consistent follower or champion.”

February 5, 1881.

“A Scotchman who, during his visits to Marsden, had frequent opportunities of seeing Mr. Schofield and his manner of life, pays the following just tribute to his memory, when writing to a friend: ‘Let me join in sincere regret over the death of your worthy townsman, William Schofield. Among Marsden men I had the pleasure

“ ‘of his genial smile and friendly nod. I feel loath to
“ ‘think that the manly form, and gracious solidity of deport-
“ ‘ment, which moved in and out, are no longer to be seen
“ ‘of men. He seemed to me to gather into his portly
“ ‘person all the traditions of the elders. He believed in
“ ‘Methodism, and when the Marsden men saw him, they
“ ‘saw the cohesing hand which Wesley’s followers were
“ ‘locally united by. It was good to think how one man
“ ‘can leaven a lump, can go on unhaunting, yet unresisting,
“ ‘in the faith of a good cause, by dignified quietude and
“ ‘integrity, until it be seen of men and lifted out of the
“ ‘byeways of disregard or neglect. Honour be to the good-
“ ‘souled Yorkshireman, who has gone down in the midst
“ ‘of his usefulness. I, for one, cherish his memory, and I
“ ‘will with sorrow count on his absence from the list of
“ ‘friendly and familiar faces of Marsden. I read the
“ ‘succinct and well-deserved summary of his character in
“ ‘the *Examiner* with interest and respect. William Scho-
“ ‘field called up to me Cowper’s lines—

“ ‘An honest man, close-buttoned to the chin,
“ ‘Broad cloth without, and a warm heart within.’ ”

“ ‘Peace be to the memory of the Marsden worthy,
“ ‘who held to good principles, and kept the faith in his day
“ ‘and generation. What a renovated world it would be,
“ ‘if it possessed many of that race of believers ! ’ ”

The former paragraph was from the pen of one who had known William from his youth up, and during a great portion of his life was an intimate friend.

Concluding our imperfect delineation of William Schofield, we are mindful that there was nothing astounding in his life; nothing bordering on the great; no special heights attained by him unattainable by those he left be-

hind. His influence and his happiness are the heritage of all who *choose* to cherish the companionship of God. And no one need be either laughed or argued out of the joys which he found to be soul-satisfying and real.

He could say with Watts—

“ Lord, when my spirit takes her fill
At some good word of Thine—
Not warriors, who divide the spoil,
Have joys compared with mine.”

He wore his crown in his heart. It was a crown of content. He defined it as “ something 'at the world could neither give n'r take away.” He was rich in faith, and his riches overflowed to others in the blessings of goodness, cheerfulness, sympathy, and loving help.

He acknowledged repeatedly “ religion has done much for me,—and what it has done for me it can do for all.” He pre-eminently believed in the gospel—

“ Whosoever will.”





SNAIL HORN BRIDGE.

"CENTRE OF THE VILLAGE WHERE THEY UNITE THEIR WATERS
AND FORM THE RIVER COLNE." —Page 15.

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